TANUM'S TOKENS OF NORWAY

PEAKS AND PINES

BY
J. A. LEES

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"They trotted down the snow slope" - **Page 138**

PEAKS AND PINES

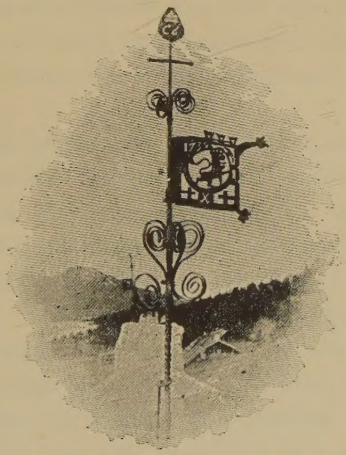
Another Norway book

BY

J. A. LEES

With 31 illustrations by the author

"When all the world has grown a bore,
And all your life hard lines,
Come hither! Peak and pine no more,
'Mid Norway's peaks and pines"



An ancient vane

JOHAN GRUNDT TANUM FORLAG

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Publisher's Foreword

In the last century, hundreds of descriptions of travelling in Norway were published in England. Most of these books have long since been forgotten, but one of them sems to be immortal—in any case case in Norway itself—*Three in Norway, by Two of Them*. With inimitable humour, the book describes the trials and tribulations of three young English gentlemen in the area around Gjende in Jotunheimen, where they hunted and fished with great success.

The first edition of the book appeared in London in 1882; the second edition followed the year after that. By 1912, the work was in its sixth edition. An American edition was issued in Philadelphia in 1884, and it was published no less than three times in the famous Tauchnitz Series of Leipzig, the last of which appeared as recently as 1925. In Norway, the success of the book has been even more impressive. The first translation was printed in 1884, and the most recent in 1967. In all, I have been able to record ten editions in Norway, in addition to a Swedish version of 1888. *Three in Norway* is very well established as a classic Norwegian travelogue, and, though one cannot say that it will last forever, one can certainly predict that new editions of it will appear.

The thoroughly consistent style of the book indicates without a doubt that it was the work of only one man. The author of the book was James A. Lees. His friends contributed sketches and diary entires, and Lees—Esau of the tale—and Walter J. Clutter-

buck—the Skipper—agreed to share the honour of authorship. Whatever happened to the honorarium of £50 is not known, but, then, they were gentlemen "of independent means."

After a hunting and fishing trip to British Columbia in which the "Skipper" also went along, James A. Lees wrote *B.C. 1887*, which was published in London in 1888 and in Christiania in 1890.

First love never grows old. In 1898, a middle-aged Lees returned to Norway to hunt reindeer. Perhaps his breath and steps had become somewhat shorter, but, if anything, his enthusiasm had increased since those happy days in Jotunheimen. His friend C. Kennedy—John of *Three in Norway*—also came along with him.

The two youngest members of the expedition were the author's only son Robin (Bobby), who was killed in 1918 in the Great War, and his nephew Eric Lees.

That summer's adventures in Norway resulted in *Peaks and Pines* the following year. This work has never been published in Norwegian and the Norway Travel Association considers it too worth while a book to be forgotten. Therefore, a new edition of this work, dedicated to Den Norske Turistforening,[1] which is celebrating its hundredth anniversary in 1968, is being published. The choice of *Peaks and Pines* for this is only natural since James A. Lees has been the favourite author of those who know and love the Norwegian mountains.

As an experienced hunter, Lees covers his tracks only too well. He absolutely refuses to reveal where he stalks the wild reindeer. His expedition sets out from a farm called Ingenstad ("Nowhere"), stays at a place near Nord Vand ("North Lake"), and hunts somewhere between Nordmannshø ("Norseman's Peak") and Snetind ("Snow Peak"). Presumably, this was at Lesja in Gudbrandsdalen.

James A. Lees was very concerned about the fate of the wild reindeer, and rightly so. True enough, the hunting season was limited, but the bag of the individual hunter was unlimited. In the

[1] The Norwegian Mountain Touring Club.

1930s, hunting was very strictly controlled. As a result, the herds of reindeer have greatly increased. When *Peaks and Pines* was written, about 1,000 reindeer were shot each year; today, the figure is nearer 10,000. The chances for a successful hunt are now much better than in Lees' day, but the excitement of the chase is the same.

The first edition of *Peaks and Pines* had several photographic illustrations, but these could not be satisfactorily reproduced and have therefore been left out of this edition. With the exception of the verses which introduced each chapter, the body of the text is unabridged. The spelling of Norwegian words and place-names is that of the author.

Erling Welle-Strand.

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CHAPTER I

The Voyage of the "Pram"

So we walked down to the harbour-side, and bought a pram. Now the pram of Norway must by no means be confounded with the English vessel which bears the same name. This, as every one knows, is generally to be found cruising in Kensington Gardens, or anchored bow and stern on the pavement in front of any bonnet shop, and is navigated by a mixed crew of nursemaid, life-guardsman, and—when it has not fallen out unobserved—baby; the last-named being the most energetic of the three.

The Norwegian pram, on the contrary, is usually manned by a woman with a pair of sculls, and is kept afloat by the strenuous exertions of two or three males, armed with hats or boots or any other handy substitutes for the forgotten baling-tin. It is built entirely of wood, the boards being fastened with rough pegs instead of nails; there is no keel, but the bottom is rounded rather like an English «whisket» or garden basket, and it slopes upwards to a high flat-nosed bow overhanging the water something after the fashion of a Thames punt. The joints are at first a little defective, and it is likely that if you drop your knife or sketch-book, it may fall through one of the chinks; but after filling up the worst places with your handkerchief and socks and pieces of moss, it becomes fairly watertight, and can be used with comparative safety by any expert swimmer.

We paid twenty-eight shillings for the ship complete, with two pairs of sculls, a mast, and twenty yards of tow-line, and were

strolling back to the hotel, when a smart little steamer came paddling into the harbour, and half-an-hour later our pram and all other belongings were safely stowed on board her.

It was the 24th of June, and all day long the cannon had been firing, while flags fluttered bravely all over the brightly painted little town. Poles are cheap in Norway, and it is a poor house that has not two or threee flagstaffs somewhere about it, and a poor occasion that is not good enough for a Norseman to salute with a profusion of bunting and banging.

We turned in soon after eleven, and though there is no darkness at this time of year, the twilight was sufficient to show up the flaring balefires on all the hills in sight; blazing now on St. John's day as a few centuries back they blazed for Baldur's funeral pyre, and long before for Baal, and longer still for who shall say how many other gods and heroes whose very names have passed away.

The *Stavanger* made an early start next day, and soon afterwards we discovered that, in our hurry to get away from Christiansand, neither of us had happened to inquire whither she was going. She turned westward, and it was such a lovely morning that we instantly felt certain we wanted to go west; everything in that sunlit breezy air was delightful, and even the low rocky islands and bare inhospitable shores looked beautiful in their setting of clear water, with fleets of either-duck and guillemots, and every now and then a seal's round head to break the monotony of the view.

However we had embarked for the purpose of catching trout, and we must make up our minds where to begin. So we interviewed any one who could talk bits of language with which we were acquainted, and during the course of that day, while the *Stavanger* plunged into all sorts of fjords and harbours, and visited various little towns hidden away up crannies in the rocks, we acquired a good deal of information about lakes and rivers of the west, and got many suggestions in answer to the important question, «Where shall we land?»

At last the Captain's opinion was taken. We saw him think—

in Norwegian — "At the very next stopping-place"; but he suppressed this natural inclination, and with the utmost politeness told us in excellent English so much in favour of Flekkefjord, that the expedition was disembarked on the little pier belonging to that important city.

Before starting we tried to swell up the joints of our pram by filling it with water, but this ran out so much more quickly than an ordinary bucket could pour it in, that the scheme was a failure. Then it was that the harbour-master came to our rescue, one of the best of the many willing helpers that have been so often found when needed in our Northern rambles.

Do you remember how Tom Sawyer got the fence white-washed? Human nature is much the same in Norway as in America, and lavish volunteer assistance has frequently been forthcoming as soon as we have undertaken any unpleasant job with an appearance of absorbing devotion to it. I do not accuse the harbourmaster of any unworthy impulse; on the contrary, I believe that he really was actuated by pure philanthropy, with perhaps a shade of pity for our feeble efforts: but the result speedily was that *he* was trifling with hot pitch and oakum and such like delicacies under the broiling sun, while *we* were toiling through the varied courses of Middags-mad in the little inn hard by.

Presently he arrived, his face beaming with tar and good-nature, and announced that all the leaks were stopped, and we packed our goods into the pram and rowed gaily off up the river which ran into the harbour.

We are apt to think of Norway as a country of pines and fir-trees; but here oaks were predominant, with a sprinkling of beech and ash trees, and no doubt this accounted for the tannery which came as such a surprise in this very uncommercial-looking part of the world. That, however, was the last evidence of manufacturing enterprise we were to see for some time, except the inevitable circular saws for cutting up herring-barrel staves. All round the southern and western coasts, and a short distance inland, these noisy contrivances are about as numerous as the houses: they are

rigged in the most distressing way, on the same shaft as the rough little over-shot water-wheel which drives them. The water is simply led down a steep wooden spout which aims a jet at the wheel, but the height of fall is so great, and the supply of water so unfailing, that this primitive application of power is quite good enough for its purpose; it is in fact a very rough and wasteful forerunner of the Pelton wheel.

A short length of flat river, and three or four miles of a lake known as Loia Vand, and then we had to land for an overland climb. In spite of the harbour-master's exertions the pram was still almost as wet inside as out, but we kept steadily plugging the worst places, and in the course of time she became quite sea-worthy.

We were lucky enough to find a cart at the end of the lake, and soon had pram and cargo roped on to it, and started up the hill. The road was good though steep, and an hour more brought us down to Lunde Vand, a big lake about fifteen miles long and between one and two in width.

The wind was with us, for a wonder; it is perfectly extraordinary how seldom this happens to any human being; and we hoisted a ground-sheet as a sail, and lazied up to Sirenaes, where a fair-sized and fishy-looking river came running down from the east: and by this time we felt we had done a day's work, so camped, and caught some little trout for supper. Then to sleep until the morning sun had made the tent so unbearably hot that we were obliged to turn out.

Lunde is an anomalous piece of water: it *looks* all right, and wee troutlets abound in it, but its reputation for fishing is evil, and as far as we could prove it, deservedly so. There must be fish, and big ones in it one would suppose—possibly ferox; but a week or two later we gave it a good trial with artificial baits of sorts, and got nothing. The river between it and Siredal Vand has small trout, up to three-quarters of a pound, galore; probably there are bigger fish in it than this, but we did not see them: and then comes the lake, which is good.

We bravely undertook to row and tow the loaded pr
the Sire River, and this noble resolution held out until
very hot and thirsty, and the stream was growing more a
rapid. Then we engaged a native, and put him at the *front* end
the tow-rope (this is most important), and the work became much
less arduous.

The Skipper's note-book contained this memorandum: "Next time engage *two* natives—towers of strength—and swagger up the bank yourself."

We spent a delightful week or two in leisurely sailing and paddling up the eighteen miles of Siredal, with occasional bits of hard work when the wind was high and contrary. The pram is a capital fishing-boat, as it turns like a top and drifts at about the proper speed, but it is a grievous vessel with a head-wind. Every wave hits the overhanging bottom under the bows like a battering-ram, and the boat checks as if she had run on to a sand-bank; but time was not of much importance, and we shifted camp as a rule only when the weather helped us, except once when we were driven out of a beautiful cosy nook by the mosquitoes, and had to perch our tent high on a wind-swept rock instead.

A curious sight at this camp was an ash-tree of quite respectable dimensions growing out of the top of a gnarled old oak, both of them in very robust health. The roots of the ash were in a fork at a good height from the ground, and no doubt found their way down to terra firma through some decayed fissure in the trunk.

There were no blank days, and the weather was the best Norwegian, which is the highest praise in our vocabulary. The trout were lovely game fish, as pink as salmon, running from half-pounders to 1 ½ lbs., quite big enough to show good sport with our small rods and light tackle. The pleasantest time for fishing was from about ten o'clock to midnight, though sometimes they rose well at almost any part of the day, especially in the strongest winds.

Glorious nighs they were, when the sun had dipped behind the hills for his brief nap, leaving a wealth of glowing colour above

«The oak, and the ash, and the bonny ivy-tree,
they grow far better in the north countree»

him in the northern sky; and after the blazing day it was delightful to push off in the pram, and make for the foot of the grey walls which rose sheer out of the lake and towered a thousand feet—some of them twice that height—above our heads.

Right at their foot the big trout lay, the surest cast for a rise being to hit the rock with the fly a few inches above the water.

There was no darkness; but the absence of brilliant light, and the natural gloom under the steep, often overhanging cliffs, just aided the fisherman enough to ensure a heavy bag; and before the next long day had fairly started, there was always enough breakfast for ourselves and the nearest sæter in the bottom of the boat.

We generally stopped fishing when we had caught about forty between us, as we could always find a home for that number, including of course our own consumption; and we have never wilfully caught more than could be made use of by someone.

Almost any fly will kill at this time, but we did best with big blackish ones, Zulus and such-like creations, and one or two pets of our own. The best fish were under the biggest rocks. until we had worked right up to the top of the lake—the northern end—and there we found the highest average weight.

As a general rule the upper end of a Norwegian lake holds the best fish, even if there is no water coming into it there; the river, just where it runs out a big lake, is almost sure to be good; and the best casts in the lake itself depend on its character. In most of the high mountain waters, the places where a ridge of rock stands up from the deeper bottom to within a few feet of the surface are the likeliest spots; these you can find best by looking down from the high ground, when their light green colour (whence their name "gröna") contracts vividly with the darker hue of the deep water.

But Siredal, except at the north end, was so uniformly deep that the only lurking-places for fish were, we suppose, in the subaqueous ledges and crannies of the cliffs themselves.

The observance of Sunday appears to be a matter of altitude. At sea-level the strictest Sabbatarianism obtains, but with every increase of height a more tolerant spirit prevails, until at about 4000 feet you are allowed to darn your socks and read Dickens without incurring censure; and at 5000 it is even whispered that reindeer have been stalked by the „unco guid", who have salved their conscience, however, by not taking home the liver and kidneys until the next day.

Siredal was only a few score feet above the sea, and even fishing might, we thought, have annoyed the very sparse population; so we lay in camp and watched the antics of a large magpie family, who were revelling in our bits of discarded food.

The Norseman, under a perfectly well-founded belief that this bird is under the protection of the Devil, treats it with respectful kindness, which is repaid by an insolent familiarity and flippant wickedness that is perfectly disgusting. We felt that it would be a praiseworthy deed to show our disapproval of this conduct, so after a little thought we ran out about twenty yards of reel line, to which was attached a brilliant Silver Doctor, and carelessly scattered it among a few scraps of trout fins which the magpies were briskly investigating, in front of the tent.

Unfortunately, what the Father of Lies does not know about fishing is not worth knowing, and though we had several bites, the wary bird was always prompted to drop the glittering bauble just in time; but we thus contrived to have all the joys of angling without scandalising our friends, or causing pain to any living thing.

There were not many kinds of birds in this part of our rambles. Magpies were perhaps the most common; but we saw an occasional heron and buzzard, and once a sea-eagle, besides the ordinary small birds, of which fieldfares, redwings, and wheatears are everywhere fairly numerous.

The bird-lover will at first be disappointed in the inland resources of Norway, at any rate if his expectations ran as high as mine originally did. I have found no place where there is either the number or variety of species that almost any part of Great Britain can show; but, on the other hand, you can without difficulty (though not of course without some industry and patience) become quite intimate with some splendid creatures who are not often on visiting terms at home—such as eagles, rough-legged buzzards, and black and red throated divers; and the very scarcity of the bird-folk makes their society more noteworthy and interesting on the few occasions when you meet them.

CHAPTER II

In Siredal

There is beautiful wild country round the northern part of Siredal, and we left the lake and played about for some time.

It was of course too early in the year for shooting, so there was a slight tendency to sameness about our food; we had a few pounds of bacon, butter, and biscuits, and plenty of tea and flour. Beyond that there were trout, and if necessary, more trout. They never failed; and it says a good deal for their excellence that at every meal during a month they were always present, and it was in no ungracious spirit that someone murmured *„Toujours treat"*.

The berries (wimberries, blueberries, bilberries, call them which you like) were plentiful and ripe; and one day we gathered a hatful, and contemplated a baked blueberry pudding.

Now one of the Skipper's many interesting characteristics is an occasional detachment from, or superiority to, mundane affairs, which rude people call absence of mind.

Among your other accomplishments in these educational times, you, oh reader, doubtless possess a thorough knowledge of cookery. But for any benighted lingerer from less-favoured ages, let it be briefly stated that bread is constructed mainly of flour and liquid; pastry of flour and grease.

No man is more thoroughly aware of these leading principles than the Skipper, but it is supposed that one of these periods of inward thought came on just when he had the cooking materials all spread out; and things began to happen forthwith.

We had not any elaborate canteen, and our baking at this time was done by digging a round hole, in which a good fire was kept going for about an hour; then it was raked out, and a tin containing the bread or other stuff to be baked was put in, and the hot embers packed all round and above it: the lid being made to fit outside the tin, so that no ashes or dust could fall in. In the case of bread the dough was calculated to fill perhaps a quarter of the oven, to allow for rising; but for this unprecedented pudding the tin had a complete lining of paste, and was full to the brim with blueberries and sugar.

It usually took about half-an-hour to finish a bake, but on this

The fishermen and the Djinn

occasion only a few minutes after the embers were heaped about the oven, we were horrified to witness a gradual upheaval of the lid, and a monstrous apparition emerged which grew and grew

until a bloated dough-faced creature, with a tin that jauntily perched on its head, stared us in the face. At last the baking was finished, and we found ourselves the proud possessors of the tallest loaf ever made in Norway, with an inner crumb of the most gorgeous imperial purple, and a heart of blueberries. Moreover we ate it, and thought it good, but the experiment has never been repeated, and in fact it is doubtful whether even the Skipper knows exactly how it was done.

This particular pudding was of course a masterstroke which could only result from the unconscious cerebration of a genius. But absence of mind is not necessarily a proof of genius, though there are not a few persons to whom the entire absence of their own mind would be at any rate a step in that direction. I knew a man who ate a five-pound note in this condition while he mused upon things, but the Bank of England were the only people who saw any inspiration in his performance.

And sometimes it causes considerable trouble to comparatively harmless people. Recently a dear old lady came to stay, and on the morning of her intended departure, she firmly, though with pain, refused to leave, because her choicest silk gown had been stolen under my roof. Worse than that, she insisted on hunting for it all over the house, on a blazing July day, and the better to investigate, proposed to adorn her nose with a pair of gold spectacles, and discovered that they likewise had disappeared! All through that sweltering day she raged and rummaged without effect, and when at last in an exhausted state she went to bed, *two* elaborate triumphs of the dressmaker's art were doffed, the missing gown being undermost, and having the spectacles in its pocket.

Every traveller who publishes his experiences of this part of the world discovers as a new fact that the Norwegians are very honest. It is in fact probable that this is the identical country in which Alexander the Great went about with a lantern looking for a dishonest man. The story may possibly not be in your history-book, but that does not prevent it from being true, you know. Yet, alas, no number of exceptions will make a rule, and in Siredal befell the

adventure of "The Foreigners and the Scandinavian Thief", which, as you have not heard it, I will now proceed to relate.

The Skipper was at this time presiding over the Exchequer, and his methods were somewhat of a trial to me, because I never knew in which particular position of peril our total worldly wealth might be. Still the annoyance was not so great as taking care of it myself would have been, and I had not the mental anxiety inseparable from the reduction to a least common denominator of kroner, shillings, and marks. And as the sole use we could make of money was an occasional expenditure of ten öre (= 1 ¼ d.) on milk, I let him continue at the head of the Treasury, and got all the satisfaction possible out of incessant grumbling at his carelessness.

One day a nice little boy brought back the bulky purse into which all our money—about £12 in ten kroner notes—was packed, and indicated that he had picked it up on a grassy bank, about a mile down the lake.

The Skipper said, with conviction—

"I believe that boy is speaking the truth; I did change my flies just there."

And appeared to consider the losing of the purse quite a natural consequence of this operation.

So we munificently offered him a krone (about 13 ½ d.), at which the youthful Viking exhibited symptoms of the liveliest dissatisfaction; and we concluded he was asking in Norwegian, "Wot's this?" We explained—in the best English—that that was all he would get, and at last induced him to go.

Presently he returned with his father, who looked exceedingly friendly, but inveighed on the subject of our proffered reward with so much vigour, that at last we held out a handful of coins and told him to help himself. He first put back the krone and then selected a two öre piece, which comes as near a farthing as possible, and handed it to his son. Then they both took off their hats, and shook hands with great fervour; and we at last realised that all this trouble had arisen from our outrageous attempt to

give a boy a whole krone for such very matter-of-course behaviour.

After this the Skipper became careless, and acted in the way that the school-books tell us was usual in the days of King Alfred. In modern England it would be useless to hang your watch by the roadside; the first person that passed would be certain to officiously pull it down and return it; and he would return it to somebody that never had it before. And if you scatter bank-notes broadcast, you are locked up as a lunatic. I remember a man doing it once in a well-known old hotel in Covent Garden. The place was littered with £ 10 and £ 100 notes for a morning, and over £ 20,000 was collected by various people and taken to the manager. But in the afternoon the owner of all this wealth was trotted off to Bedlam. There was, however, no asylum in Siredal, and the Skipper acted just anyhow.

So one evening when we came back to the tent after an expedition to a lake some miles away, we found General Chaos (and staff) had arrived. Evidently a burglar had forced an entrance by the simple process of walking in, and had ransacked the safes, wardrobes, and plate chests.

My financial position was at this time much the same as that of the young gentleman who recently figured in the Bankruptcy Court.

Liabilities: £9436, 16s. 4d. Assets: A little fishing tackle.

Consequently he had taken nothing of mine: it was all there was to take. But he had collected our £12 purse, and the Skipper's watch and gold studs, and a beautiful spotty tie, and even a map.

I told the Skipper I was very pleased about the watch, studs, and tie, but extremely annoyed about £6 of the money and half the map; and then we went out to hunt for the brigand. We remembered that on our way up the lake, an unpleasant-looking and only partially sober Norseman had come down to this same camp one night with a bottle of aquavit, and tried very hard to get us to drink with him; and we thought it likely that he was the spoiler of our goods. Climbing up the hill above the camp, we caught

sight of this very man just shutting the door of the nearest sæter, in what looked like a rather flurried manner. We marched up and knocked, and got no answer.

The Skipper said, "That settles it; we shall have to go in and search."

To my mind, warped by early training at the Chancery Bar, and the duly administering of indifferent justice on the county bench at home, this seemed a trifle irregular; but he said:—

"My good Owl" (the Skipper always commenced a legal argument thus), "that sort of foolery may do in an effete old country like England, but these people over here are civilised; they won't stand it; come on."

So in we went, and were rather embarrassed to find an old man asleep in one bed, an old woman in another, and our aquavit friend very evidently shamming sleep in a third. I am bound to say he was but a poor amateur hand at all the finer touches of thieving; no honest man could have slept through all the racket we made in searching the one room of which the house consisted; and a cleverer rogue would certainly have waked and exhibited some righteous indignation. The loot, however, was probably hidden somewhere outside, for we found nothing, and finally had to retire discomfited.

Our knowledge of the language was at this time extremely small, but we had a little Danish dictionary, and with this invaded the next sæter, and were received with the usual cordial welcome. It took both sides a long time and a copious use of the dictionary, but in the end we had all the information that was needed, and still better, a note from this sæter-mand to the Parson of the district, who could speak English. Our aquavit friend was undoubtedly the culprit: his name was Olaf, but his relationship to the Saint of that—or any other—Ilk was extremely remote, as he was a general blackguard of the deepest dye, and no doubt a perfect nuisance to all his neighbours.

This turn of affairs upset all our arrangements for continuing the fishing tour; and we had to spend most of the next day in

journeying to the Parsonage. There we were received most kindly, supper and beds were offered, and our difficulties tackled in a very energetic manner; in fact the whole population, both Church and State, seemed to consider that their personal honour was involved, and that they must spare no pains to set the matter right.

As for the Parson, he deserved the very high praise which I once heard bestowed on a wellknown Suffolk rector: „If all paasons were to dew as our paason dew, there wouldn't be so many as dew as they dew dew."

Consequently at breakfast-time next morning we were invaded by the Constable of the district, with a very disconsolate and hangdog-looking Olaf in tow, and all the missing property except the money. The procedure which followed was not exactly in accordance with English ideas. Olaf tried to bribe us not to prosecute by offering to return the money: his theory was that at present it had simply been carried to a Suspense Account; he could not be said to have stolen the watch and other things, as we had got them back already; and if the money were also returned, *he* could not see what there was for any one to grumble about.

The Parson advised us to close with this offer; the Constable „lay low and kep' on saying nuffin."

Rather in terror lest there might be some Norse equivalent for „compounding a felony," we at last agreed, and Olaf and the Law went off together to fetch the treasure.

Then the Parson explained to us that this method would save us a world of trouble we should only have to go to the Sheriff at Flekkefjord and get our wealth back without much formality; but we gathered that he had doubts whether Justice would recognise any compact with crime that a couple of ignorant foreigners might have made.

And so apparently it turned out; when two days later we visited the Sheriff at Flekkefjord, and Olaf, looking more woe-begone and disreputable than before, was produced by that indefatigable Constable, who had never left him by day or night since our first interview. Remorse had, however, only gnawed on Olaf to the

extent of £8, 10s. out of our £12, so we did not feel overwhelming compunction at the ruthless disenchantment that awaited him. It is not only in England that people go about clamouring for „Justice!" and being profoundly disgusted when they chance to get it.

We were asked a few questions by way of identifying the property, but without being sworn; our friend the harbour-master interpreting; and then all the recovered property was handed over to us. No evidence was given about Olaf, at any rate not while we were present. We fancy they acted on the assumption that he was the only scoundrel in that jurisdiction, and so whenever anything was missing, Olaf was sent for and locked up without further bother. He had been out of jail quite a considerable number of days now, and apparently they were only too thankful to have an opportunity of sending him in again, and we were looked upon as deliverers of the oppressed, for the magnanimous way in which we had got our things stolen. He was to languish, as far as we could understand, for two years, and afterwards to be beheaded, or sequestrated, or married, or something of that sort. The Constable wanted to know what he must do with the other seventy kroner if he could unearth it; and we nobly told him to keep it for his trouble, which made him the happiest man in Norway, and we sincerely hope he got it. But things are not always what they seem.

Then we sailed away in triumph up Loia Vand again, to find a hurricane blowing against us on Lunde. Luckily we were only a furlong or so from camp, but in that distance we smashed an oar and a rowlock, and got so much water into the boat, that a packet of sugar which we had marketed at Flekkefjord was entirely dissolved away. And so ended our experience of Norwegian law, an institution for which it is needless to say we cherish the sincerest admiration.

CHAPTER III

Tommy of Læstrygonia

Besides taking up so much time that might have been employed in intellectual trout-fishing, these legal alarums and excursions had rather cast a gloom over Siredal, and a Norwegian friend whom we met at Flekkefjord suggested that we should go down to his river and catch salmon. So this part of our plan was altered, and a couple more days of pram, stolkjærre, and portage, took us to the mouth of the proffered river.

It was, as far as salmon were concerned, all mouth; there being only about sixty yards between salt water and the first impassable fall; but this short length consisted of a lovely pool and a run; both of which when the water is right must be very good. Just at this time, however, things went contrary; we could not move a fish, and were speedily reduced to the pursuit of trout above the fall. And this employment soon palled, for although there were numbers to be caught—we got eighty one day—they were not large.

At night we enlisted a native boy, and got him to scull us about the estuary in hopes that the sea-trout might have begun to run.

So down the fjord we paddled, the very fjord it may be that saw the comrades of Odysseus meet their doom. For this is even now Listerland; and here if anywhere the Læstrygonians lived and tended their flocks, and—though Homer forgot to mention it—probably fished for salmon, and found their days no busier than the sleepless summer nights.

Before us stretched the far-famed haven where the rows of long

The Læstrygonian fjord

black ships lay safely sheltered by the unbroken wall of lofty cliffs all round, and now as then the waters slept, unrippled by the smallest wave.

And yonder far away to seaward, the white foam spouting at

their feet, stood the eternal rocks, from which that terrible hail of stones came pelting down on the luckless ships and their straining crews, as they fled back to the mighty gateway of the giants' land.

Here was the very beach where the herald and his companions landed; and there the track, which three thousand years ago possibly *may* have been „smooth," leading to the far off snow-capped mountains.

And by the way, what was Olaf the Sinner but a degenerate Læstrygonian? He was no true Norseman, and though without the strength of Antiphates, he had all his greediness, and I fancy would have had no particular objection to seeing us, like the ill-fated Achæans, wriggling on a salmon spear,[1] if only meddlesome Constable would keep out of the way.

Here or hereabouts, less disputably, did Olaf the Saint lie in hiding with his last twelve ships, while conquering Knut sailed triumphant up the coast, and past these mighty cliffs he rowed out to his last victory, and the death of Erling Skjalgson, the long sea-skirmish all the way to Valdal Fjord, and that marvellous flight eastward over the reindeer-fjelds, among the mountains which we should see a little later in the year.

Meanwhile the young Man-eater whom we had engaged sculled us about the fjord, a hundred yards or so into the salt water; and it was not long before we had home fish; all of them, strange to say, common brown trout. Beauties they were by the usually accepted standard of beauty in a trout, *i.e.* the number of inches they measure round the waist.

All were taken on fly, but they were really feeding on some small fish, probably "Norwegian Anchovies," which I imagine to be strictly speaking sprats. Some of them were actually more than "full to the brim"; we caught one with a good half sprat sticking out of his mouth, because there simply was not another atom of room inside, and yet in that condition he had managed to annex

[1] Leister? Was this word also derived from the amiable habit of gaffing their unfortunate visitors which Homer describes so vividly?

just one fly more, which unfortunately for him was an Alexandra.

It was getting fairly dark now at night, especially under the shadow of these big cliffs; and it was not easy to see what was happening at the other end of one's line, though the rises were pretty evident both to eye and ear. But every now and then the vicious jerk at the rod, and special commotion in the water, told of two on at the same time, and once it happened that three fish were hooked: though only two of them landed.

At this time we often fished with three flies, as hitherto we had not met with any really big fish, but if there is a probability of monsters, it is not a sensible proceeding. One good big fly on a light cast will, I think, actually catch better and give more pleasure even than two, and two should in any case be the limit. Of course if you get among the „most hugeous" denizens of British Columbian rivers, or other unsophisticated giants, you can if you like use a salmon-cast, and if it pleases you to drag out two fish at once, the thing can be done: we used to behave in that manner up in the Selkirk Range of the Rockies, but I am not quite certain that it should be classed under the head of "Fishing".

In Norway, however, or at any rate in those parts that I have tried, it is rare to find the trout in such a taking mood that you need not trouble yourself; much more commonly you will have to fish your best, and will deserve all you catch.

But this night was one where "everything goes," and a heap of trout, from half-pounders to one pound, was rapidly growing up. I had hooked another pair, and was just inducing them to begin to come quietly, when suddenly there was a screech at the Skipper's reel, and in another moment at mine also. Then the two little rods bent at once towards the same place, and we guessed what had happened: a big fish had taken the fly and charged into the middle of the two earlier victims, and now the three of them were wildly careering about this darksome ocean in about seventeen different directions at once. The boy of course at once went crazy, and what with him and the darkness and the trio of frantic fish, we had a very exciting five minutes; but at last

a weary tangle of flies and gut and two sea-trout—one a pound and the other just over three pounds —were safely deposited in the bottom of the pram, the other one escaping in the confusion.

It was at the beginning of this turmoil that I incautiously remarked, "Oh Helen Tommy", a metaphorical form of words then much in vogue, signifying—well, it doesn't signify *what* it signifies.

I have always regretted this inadvertence, though the circumstances did appear at first to demand something of that nature. But you know the way in which children will pick out and remember the only naughty word in the good story-book; even so was it with our innocent Man-eater. He had no English, and had made not the slightest effort to acquire any, but "Helen Tommy" simply dazzled him with its brilliance; and all the rest of that evening we heard him practising it to himself and trying it over and over until he was sure he had caught he exact delivery. He came to camp early next morning and greeted us with his new accomplishment, and we felt it our duty to eradicate what was fast becoming a habit before he hurt himself with it.

So we exhorted him—with much difficulty and a Danish dictionary—and demonstrated that there were times and seasons; and that though it was an eminently suitable phrase for those occasions to which—er—it was—er—suited, still it was not fitted for permanent and perpetual employment. We further explained that in England its use was confined to a very limited and select class, such as ourselves, and that outside that class it would scarcely be etiquette for any one, except possibly a very eminent statesman, to indulge in it.

Would you believe it, that boy had never heard of Harcourt, and the more we reasoned with him, the more enamoured of the expression did he become; though it is only due to ourselves to say we managed to confuse him so much about it, that he was never afterwards quite sure which side up it ought to be.

Two days later we sadly parted from the seatrout, which, mixed with their brown cousins, had given us capital sport every day, after that first discovery of their haunts; twenty-eight was

our best evening's bag, running from ¾ lb. to 3 ¼; all sea-trout except four.

The last we saw of our henchman he was waving an energetic farewell, and shouting out something we could not distinctly catch, but which sounded uncommonly like — — tommy. So, if ever in your wanderings you chance on an ingenuous Norwegian youth, understanding no English, but answering to the name of Tommy Hellan, you are probably not far from our Læstrygonian Fjord.

Some kind friend had told us that a steamer would pass at ten o'clock at night; we had only to paddle out, wave a Union Jack—he took it for granted that every Englishman carried this national symbol about with him, but subsequently said a pocket-handkerchief would do—and she would stop for us.

We accordingly started on this simple little enterprise about nine o'clock. The fjord was two or three miles long, and, as already mentioned, quite protected from the wind, but as we approached the giant gateway at the mouth, we were rather surprised to see a sudden jet of white water fifty feet in the air against the towering cliff. A few more minutes' rowing was enough to show us that, outside the natural haven, a tremendous sea was running, in which our cockleshell of a pram would not have lived a minute, and there was nothing for it but to miss the steamer, put back, and make the journey overland next day.

It was just as well after all that our pram was not a lifeboat, for if we had been induced to go outside to lie in wait for that steamer, we should have been a little tired before we had boarded her, as she did not pass until midnight of the following day! By that time we were back again in Flekkefjord, and leaving the pram with our friend the harbour-master "as a slight token of our esteem and regard," we carried our few remaining possessions on to the *Bjorgvin*, and once more sailed for Christiania.

CHAPTER IV

Off to the Fjeld

At this period the Skipper went somewhere—to Japan, he *said*, though from a subsequent allusion to it as "that island lying between Borneo and Bermuda, you know," I fancy he meant Madagascar—but you really cannot expect these foreign governments to hunt through all the jails in the universe for the sake of one twopenny-halfpenny stamp.

Anyhow he goes out of the story, and the kind reader will no doubt do all the skipping which is absolutely unnesccessary in the course of this work.

And in his place the Wilson steamer brings John, who is already, as the papers say, "favourable known to the British Public," and with him Eric and Bobby, whose acquaintance the said Public has so far been fortunate enough to escape.

It is improbable that any white man exits who has failed to make friends with John as one of the "Three in Norway." If such there be, go, mark him well with a crickbat or any other handy missile, but do not ask for a new description in the present volume. Let it suffice that John was and is the perfection of a travelling companion, and a marvel as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

I am very good at account-keeping myself; in fact the first act of my Oxford career was to buy a beautiful morocco-bound cash-book, which I still possess. It has two entries, one on the Debit (or Credit) side:—

"By cheque from Old Bank, £5;" and on the Credit (or Debit) side, "Oranges, 1 s."

It is not quite apparent what became of the balance, but it seems evident that I either got through the whole of my sojourn there for £4, 19s., or else actually made a profit of that amount, both of which conclusions are distinctly creditable (or dubitable).

But John does the thing more easily, and as experience has proved that the general purse-bearer can by no possible chance make anything for himself except a large deficit, he was voted to this responsible position, and held it to the admiration of us all.

Eric is a joyous young undergraduate, and this his first experience of Norway; his only serious drawback was an enthusiastic longing to go to the top of every mountain he saw. As long as we were in the comparatively civilised parts this did not matter much, as we could generally soothe him by promising him a higher peak next day. But when we arrived in the regions where there are half-a-dozen big mountains in everybody's backyard, he became very unmanageable, and every now and then broke loose and rushed up a perfectly unnecessary 6000 feet of hill in record time. Then he usually came down, mentioned that he had a weak heart, ate a couple of large trout and two pounds of reindeer-steak and half a cubic foot of stewed fruit, said his digestion was impaired, drank six cups of coffee and a pint of cream, thumped himself on the chest to see if his lungs had stopped working, went to bed, and slept like a graven image.

Bobby is a small specimen of that irrepressible creature the British schoolboy. By forming the three elders into an offensive and defensive Triple Alliance, we were able to some extent to keep him in a state of subjection. His one redeeming feature was a Banjo, which added considerably to the gaiety of nations during our long stay on the roof of Norway.

The first week of August was over, and it was time to be starting for our intended campaign in the reindeer fjelds. The new arrivals brought a very complete camping outfit, including stores, cooking things, and a 16½-feet bass-wood canoe, a beautiful piece of work by the Peterborough Canoe Co., of Ontario, and rather a contrast to the discarded pram.

There was a little difficulty at the Custom House, because it appeared that the tariff had failed to provide for this species of goods, and there was a hot argument between two gold-laced officials as to whether it ought to pay duty as a bicycle or as dried fish.

I said, in the airiest and most confident manner that I could assume:—

Bicycle? or dried fish?

"Oh no, I never pay duty on *that;* that's a *canoe,* you know" (with great emphasis on *canoe*). And this view of the matter staggered them so much, that at last on our promising to take it out of the country again ("if there is any of it left to take," was put in as a saving clause), they admitted it free.

We faithfully performed our part of the contract, and carried that canoe out of Norway strapped up with our fishing-rods. But soft, I must dissemble. You shall hear more anon,

After buying food-stores, sleeping-bags, and a variety of other necessaries, we found we had a couple of hours to spare, and some misguided person suggested that we might as well go and get our shooting licences. These documents, as you are probably aware, give the foreigner the right to shoot on Crown lands, which

means practically all the reindeer ground that there is. They cost 200 kroner—a little over £11 each—and in other years we had asked some Norwegian friend to get them for us, and took it for granted that it was a simple performance. It *may* be, to a native, but after our experience I am inclined to doubt it.

We naturally went to the Post Office first; one goes to the Post Office for everything in these days; and we got, not the licences, but another commodity which is not always in stock at our own establishments, *i.e.* extreme civility, and instructions to apply to the Mayor.

So we hied us to the Town Hall and demanded the Mayor, and to the best of my belief he was produced, though the sight of his portly form caused Eric to assert that he was "only the Corporation." The word "only," however, was not applicable to him in any sense whatever. He too listened to our tale with the utmost urbanity, but explained that licences were under the control of something which we conceived to be the Board of Trade. He sent the Town Clerk or the Parish Beadle, or some other gorgeous functionary, to show us where the Board of Trade lived, and people took off their hats to us all along the street.

The President was in, and most affable, but desolated because he did not keep this brand of licence; he thought—nay, he was sure—that the Chief of Police was the man who purveyed them, and when we inquired his abode, the Under Secretary for War—I *think* he was; anyhow he wore a sword—was good enough to personally conduct us. By this time Eric and Bobby were hysterical, but I am pleased to remember that John and I preserved a dignity of demeanour befitting to the occasion. The attention we excited in the streets might now be described as an ovation.

The Chief of Police received us warmly, but had never heard of shooting-licences, and evidently thought we were much safer without them. Nevertheless he exhibited a polished courtesy which I hoped might not be without effect on Eric and Bobby, who however merely giggled helplessly in a corner. The natural result was, that when we again set out for a higher official whose exact

designation we did not catch, we were accompanied by a guard of honour in a helmet. In like manner have I seen distinguished foreigners (generally of Irish extraction) escorted along the streets of London. The populace was more interested than ever, and John anxiously whispered, "Did I know the Norwegian for Bow Street?"

But those two light-hearted butterflies only laughed the more.

The guard of honour ushered us into a noble building; but here, I regret to say, historical accuracy is at fault. A Personage rose to greet us; the helmet made a speech and retired, having, I fancy, obtained a written receipt for us, and it appeared that we had at last come to the only genuine and original licence shop. But whether the Personage was the Prime Minister, as I maintain, or the Archbishop, a belief to which John inclines, or the Commander-in-Chief, in accordance with Eric's theory; or whether Bobby was right for once, and he was just the King, I fear will never be known.

But even if he were only the least of these dignitaries, he was as polite as the greatest, and soon had the long-sought permits made out. Then came a further trouble; the printed date on the paper for shooting to begin was 15th August, but close times vary in the different Amts, and after inquiring where we intended to hunt, he undertook to tell us in English what creatures we might slay, on what days, in which districts. I do not habitually associate with Archbishops or even Kings at home, and in my nervousness I told him the wrong Amt; so after he had laboriously traversed the entire fauna of Scandinavia, emphasising each bird or beast by an impressive forefinger, I corrected the mistake, and he with the utmost patience started once more upon the complete list of Noah's Ark.

The recapitulation of the ossifrage and the pygarg was too much for the Frivollers, who had long ago laughed themselves into a state of limp inanity, and we seized the opportunity to remove them and ourselves from the Presence. In future we go back to the old plan of asking a friend to undertake this detail of a hunting trip, and shall certainly never again risk our liberties by

wandering about a foreign town in the company of Eric and Bobby.

One never knows what may happen. There was a friend of mine who had just been numbered among the "great unpaid," and before he had acquired any experience in the mysteries of his craft, he was suddenly invaded by the family doctor, who wanted an order to send a homicidal madman to the Asylum. Shallow was perfectly willing to sign orders to shut up the whole county, but was much taken aback when told that the maniac, with an attendant, was in a cab at the door, and it was necessary that he should be pronounced insane in the opinion of the justice, after personal inspection. My friend would not as a soldier have been particular likely to win a V.C., but he nerved himself for the interview, and looked in at the cab window. Inside there was a struggling mass of humanity, from which howls and yells of the most blood-curdling description perpetually ascended, and in that hasty glance he was dimly conscious of a wild-eyed attendant with dishevelled red hair, just in the act, as it seemed, of being overpowered by a raving black-a-vised giant, who was apparently strangling him in the bottom of the cab.

He jumped three yards backwards, ejaculating, "Mad! O Lord, yes, mad as a hatter; here, give me the paper quick."

But the doctor said, "Oh, you couldn't have seen him; that was only the attendant."

Some men would have been nonplussed; but my friend is a model of tact and resourcefulness, and without a moment's hesitation he extricated himself from this difficulty.

He said, "No, no, I don't mean the big black chap; any one could see he was all right; it was that raging red-headed lunatic down in the corner."

The doctor sat down on a rhododendron bush, and yelled louder than the menagerie in the cab. "That," he said, when he could speak, "that is Dr. ——, who is assisting me in this matter; they were trying to pull the madman from under the seat."

I forget how my tactful friend got out of this last strait, but it

is a good thing for Eric and Bobby that he was not Premier of Norway during the Quest of the Licence, otherwise their adventures would have come to an untimely end, even so early in their career.

One thing that much struck us in the course of this game of Post, was the fact that all these officials were actually there, and personally doing the work they are supposed to do. In other and less favoured lands I am informed the Head of the Department is usually represented by an Under Secretary, whose authority is vested in a Chief Clerk, and by him delegated to a Junior Clerk, for whom an efficient substitute is found in the Office Boy, whose mighty intellect is embodied in a bit of paper on the door, announcing that he will be "Back in five minutes," which is invariably false.

Probably if these people worked harder they would do a great deal more mischief. Still I am not asserting that the Norwegian method is inferior; I merely say it is different.

And now our preparations were complete, and we started for the home of the reindeer, or at any rate for one of the places where we hoped he might still be found.

The reader will easily understand that if those places were mentioned in print, they would ipso facto cease to be worth mentioning. Years ago, when we were younger and if possible less sensible even than now, the Skipper and I did write a little information about one such district, and lo! where our tent was pitched there stands to-day, I am told, a gay hotel with all the usual attractions. The reindeer of course have fled far away, and if a guest ventures to even ask anything about them the landlord simply says, "Well, you must have brought them with you; we never had any complaints before."

Moreover nowadays people cannot fall down a crevasse, or make a pair of boots, or say their prayers, or read Browning, without forming themselves into a "guild" or a "club" or an "order" or some other co-operative abomination, though for the last-mentioned devotees there is perhaps some excuse. And I have

no wish to assist in the founding of a society for the total extermination of the reindeer, even under the plausible name of a "Personally conducted Sporting Tour to the Norwegian Fjelds."

It is lamentable to think that these beautiful and, from the sporting point of view, most valuable creatures are at present on the high-road to extinction. I would not of course presume to suggest to the Norwegians what steps they ought to take, but perhaps they will allow a foreigner who has the greatest admiration for the country and people, to point out that unless some practical measures are adopted, the days of the wild reindeer will be speedily numbered.

From the sentimental standpoint, and to the naturalist, this loss would be irreparable, but even as a matter of business, the reindeer is worth a good deal of trouble. He is in my humble opinion ahead of the red deer as a sporting beast, and though the North Sea would always stop a considerable number of possible lessees, and the standard of prices would not be as high for instance as in Scotland, yet I feel sure there would be a large demand for tracts of reindeer country by willing rent-payers, both native and foreign, *if*—and this is the trouble—if they knew that such tracts would be protected against the invasion of unlimited numbers of other hunters.

There is of course a close time; in fact it is probably owing to this that any reindeer still survive, but the licence system is surely useless; it may bring in a few hundred pounds, and I for one see nothing unreasonable in charging non-natives a high price for the right to shoot. But how many reindeer has it saved? Probably not one; for it is extremely doubtful if any foreigner who seriously wishes to hunt in Norway has been prevented by the £11 licence.

Even, however, if it had choked off every "outlander," the reindeer would have had very little cause for gratitude, as long as every native-born hunter is allowed to shoulder a repeating rifle and wander about the whole country shooting at hinds and babies

at his own sweet will.[1] I do not for a moment blame him. He knows perfectly well that if he lets a hind go, his neighbour on the next hill will not be so foolish, and though probably the more thoughtful see plainly enough that the golden goose is being killed, they think they may as well take their share of the feathers.

And now what is this share? The statistics are not likely to be very accurate; and, like sausages, one has no confidence in them unless one knows the old woman who made them; but the latest that I have seen put the average annual kill of wild reindeer somewhere between 500 and 1000. Deducting few killed by foreigners, I suppose it does not work out as high as one deer to every native hunter of the peasant class; and the average money value (which after all is almost entirely the motive power in this case) is perhaps £ 1 each. To earn this he has to go through very considerable hardship, and is put to some expense, not only direct but directly, from the loss of working time during the month he is away on the fjeld. Surely the Government might contrive some method of buying out this very small vested interest, in a way that would satisfy the peasant and leave him better off than at present; while those of them who love the sport for its own sake could be employed in the protection of the valuable national property that would be at once thus created.

I am aware that the official returns can be taken to show an improvement during the last few years, and it is certainly possible that the measures already enforced have really begun to tell, and will a little later have a more marked effect. One hopes for the best, but I am basing my rather despondent opinion not so much on statistics as on personal observations. My own began in 1878, and since that time the deer have undoubtedly gone the wrong way, both in numbers and quality. If this were merely the experience of one man, it might of course be due just to bad luck, but as far as I can gather it is confirmed by every Englishman who has hunted reindeer with any regularity during this period.

[1] It is true the calf is protected by law, but up on the high fjeld the law is apt to get frost-bitten.

There is the further important question of the Lapps and their tame deer, an evil which is yearly becoming more aggravated, but this perhaps is more certain to be dealt with ere long in the interests of the Norwegian farmers, who are suffering severely from it.

However, it is more than John and I can do to protect ourselves against the depredations of Bobby, and we cannot at the same time undertake to defend the reindeer as well.

Let us, like Rip Van Winkle, hope for his "good health, and his wife's and his family's," and in the meantime suffice it to say, that we left the road at Ingenstad on 13th August, bound for a little sæter on the fjeld.

CHAPTER V

Over the Hills

Baggage for four is no small matter even when a good deal of thought has been devoted to making it as light and compact as possible, and all unnecessary articles have been sternly eliminated.

Clothing and other personal belongings ran to about 240 lbs., contained in four mail-canvas hold-alls, a most distracting and inconvenient form of portmanteau, but incomparably the best thing for camp work that has yet been invented.

Cartridges, about 30 lbs.

Fire-arms, 35 lbs.

Canoe, &c., 70 lbs.

Kitchen, 20 lbs.

Rods, &c., 15 lbs.

Beds, &c., 70 lbs.

Tent, &c., 70 lbs.

Tools, Rope, Banjo, &c., 20 lbs.

Food, 150 lbs.

Altogether, between 600 and 700 lbs., exclusive of the canoe; all of which must be packed on ponies for a long rough climb over the mountains.

Dealing with a miscellaneous pack like this is a big business anywhere, even in those countries where the thing has been reduced to a science, or should one rather say, elevated to an art. In Norway it is not a matter of daily practice; and the appliances are not as a rule in first-rate order. Moreover the Norseman, who possesses on the whole more good qualities than the native of

any other country, fails a little in thoroughness and care over this sort of work, and is prone to use rotten lash-ropes and deplorable saddles, and to say—in his own tongue—"Oh, I guess it'll do." Which it never does.

Another characteristic which exasperates the Englishman is his inability to ever see any particular reason for hurrying. We of course hurry too much, and our countrymen are now good-humouredly derided in Norway under the name of "Herr Strax;" but the Norseman carries the virtue of patient resignation to a pitch at which it becomes a vice.

In accordance with these principles we aimed at an eight o'clock start, and actually got away from Ingenstad at 10.40.

We were an imposing cavalcade: three ponies, four Norwegians, four Britons, and Bobby; the canoe on a sledge had already gone on ahead, having been made ready for the start over-night. The fifth member of the party was G., a friend whom we had met here, and who volunteered to see us safely housed in our mountain home, and worked like a slave to speed us on our way.

We mounted the hillside pretty quickly, and soon left the fir-trees below us, and were nearly through the birches before the first catastrophe happened; a cinch broke and the pack turned under the horse. In the Rockies this would have organised at short notice a very exciting circus, and probably ended in the loss of half our food, but the "hest" of Norway is a very different creature from the "cayuss" of B. C., and when he gets into trouble waits for his human friends to come and help him out of it; so no great harm was done. In fact, the packs had had so much care spent on their construction, that they were fairly impervious to damage, and the rods and guns being too precious to risk on the quadrupeds, were divided among the various bipeds.

In a couple of hours we were well on to the open fjeld, the beautiful valley with its islet-studded lake looking very small below us, and the fantastic forms of many a snowclad dome and pinnacle girding us round on every side. The tracks over these mountain wastes are profusely marked with little cairns of stones,

a precaution which looks unnecessary at first, till one remembers that already on the 6th of August snow had begun to fall on the high ground.

The chief difficulties of the uphill climb having been surmounted, a boy, who had been leading one of the horses for the first four or five miles, took leave of us and went home.

John, with what looked like culpable extravagance, gave him a whole ten-öre piece at one well swoop; Eric and I suggested that five would have been enough, and John called us the "Incorporated Company of Mean Men." Whereupon we perceived that the question lay between 1 ¼ d. and ⅝ths of a penny, so possibly the market was not being seriously spoiled after all. But the boy's profuse gratitude certainly implied that he thought it good pay.

John said we reminded him of a man he knew who allowed his daughters £ 100 a year for dress, but deducted £ 90 on account of board and lodging. And when one of them was married on the 8th of January he gave her nothing till the following New Year's day, as he said there was no provision for fractional parts of a year.

It was all very fine, but John having annexed all our money, and changed a ten-kroner note into small coins, had grown perfectly reckless, and was "chucking these ten-öre pieces about just as if they were sovereigns," as Eric was heard to mutter.

This dissension however gave place to a still more important one when we arrived at the water-shed, where a little lake with an outlet at each end marked the highest point. Eric was bent on scientific research, and wanted to boil a thermometer by way of ascertaining the altitude: it is needless to say we had not brought one, but John opined that boiling Eric's aneroid would do quite as well, and he did not think it would make any difference to its value. This was rather a sore point, for that instrument had chosen to assert that Christiania was 1100 feet above the sea, a statement which even Bobby disbelieved. But when he went on to make similar disparaging allusions to my compass and Bobby's watch, we felt that it amounted to a distinct slur on science at large, and

made a raid on his pedometer, an entirely trustworthy and useless appliance. It appeared, however, that John would have been only too pleased to have it boiled, burnt, or danced upon: he had conceived a passionate dislike for it, because one day when he was swaggering about having walked five and twenty miles, somebody asked the pedometer, and it said, "All bosh, only eleven and a quarter."

So the exact height of that ridge must remain unregistered; we can only affirm, without fear of contradiction, that it is quite high enough.

Then there came a long stretch of nearly level ground, chiefly bare stone, with desolate birdless tarns, and drifts of snow here and there in the gullies. It does not sound beautiful, and yet there is some indescribable charm about the fjeld which makes it, to me at any rate, the most fascinating country in the world; possibly the glorious air is the real secret of the feeling of intense happiness that possesses one, as soon as the roads and tourists and time-tables are left in the lower world.

We soon overtook the canoe, and its sledgedriver commenced to pour out a woeful tale of dangers and difficulties from the villainy of the track, and enthusiastic demonstrations of the skill and diligence with which he had surmounted these obstacles. But we sniffed "extra pay" in the air, so smiled benignly, and observed that the weather certainly was remarkably fine, and the scenery magnificent, and that we noticed in the almanacs that Venus was an evening star this month.

Hitherto the way had really not been exceptionally bad, but when we began to descend to the chain of lakes on which our sæter lay, it disimproved rapidly.

The canoe was packed on three bundles formed of our reindeer-skin sleeping-bags, the softest and most elastic safe from injuries by bumping or sudden drops. But it was unavoidable that the stern should extend far behind the sledge—a "stern necessity" someone observed—and when any obstruction threw the nose up, there was great danger of a smash. Two of us had constantly to

attend to this, and now the track had become so rough and devious, that is was often hard work to prevent the whole arrangement turning over.

Then the sledge began to suffer, and show signs of dissolution, and there were frequent halts for repairs. And with three packhorses on a track of this kind, it is in the nature of things that they should seldom be all in goodgoing order at once; in fact, as John remarked, "More heste, worse speed." So that it was four o'clock before we arrived at a sæter lying on the river which connects the lakes, where we had proposed to lunch, and by that time half of one of the sledgerunners had carried away, and various other portions of the expedition, including, for instance, tempers, were also rather frayed.

Our canoe-driver had been showing symptoms of annoyance ever since we had with such presence of mind failed to understand his grievance against the shortcomings of the track, and when we now began to mete out blame for his carelessness in not bringing a better sledge, he evidently thought it time to get in a counter-stroke. For this purpose, with fiendish malignancy he selected G., the most amiable of our whole party, and the very man who had worked hardest to help the canoe through its difficulties.

If G. had one prideful thought, it was that he could talk Norwegian, if not exactly like a native, at any rate considerably better than a Swede. And seeing the driver a little gloomy, he thought to divert his mind by some cheerful remarks which—so he afterwards assured us—were not only of exceptional merit, and perfectly pronounced, but also extremely appropriate to the occasion. And the wretch had the effrontery to reply, "I don't understand English," which, as G. was a Scotsman, was perhaps the most withering remark in history; and he looked as if he meant it to be so.

You know, he must have learned this particular form of blight in a book. This pervading and universal education meets one at every turn, and makes life unendurable.

Yet how great is the power of gold! When we parted from this marauder a few minutes later, one extra krone converted him into a warm admirer and life-long friend, and he would have wept on our necks, only luckily we had put half the river between us before he had counted the pay and realised our munificence.

An hour's rest with the warm welcome and hospitality that a sæter gives to the weary traveller restored us all to a nicer frame of mind. Then we managed to keep the sledge and canoe together for the short remaining distance to the water-side; and launched our ship just below the fall which the river makes as it leaves the highest of the three lakes.

New difficulties of course began at once. The weather had been cold for several days, and in consequence all the watercourses were running very low, for up here they depend almost entirely on the melting of the snow. The river at first was flat, wide, and very shallow, and it was not easy to find a course which gave sufficient depth, for with five of us, and all the guns, rods, sleeping-bags, and other small stuff, the canoe was as full as she could be, and drew about eight inches of water.

However, there were compensations; the track here goes to the farther side, and when the river is full, horses have to swim this crossing, which necessitates great trouble in transporting and repacking the loads, but to-day we perched Bobby on the foremost pony, and the lot waded over without mishap. (Three days later one of our stalkers coming the same way had to swim the horse across, simply owing to the wind having changed to the south.)

Then we left the men to continue the land journey, while the canoe sped swiftly down the ever-narrowing and deeping river towards the setting sun. There was one short portage at a fall, and then with the help of wind and stream we darted out into the light-green waters of the middle lake. This was between one and two miles long, and below it we were once more on a stream, much more confined and rocky, and with twice the speed and volume of the upper river. The canoe had proved herself a good

Running the last rapid

boat, but the momentum of the heavy load made it too hazardous to run these unknown rapids without a change.

So first G. and John, and after running one rapid, Bobby, were disembarked, and then the baggage was portaged at the worst places, until at last only Eric and I were left in; boots and most of our raiment being also put ashore.

This wisdom was abundantly justified at the last rapid, a very twisty one with three falls, which I am bound to say we ran beautifully; but it was really a shade too big, and as we shot the last and deepest fall, the boat's nose took a huge wave "green," and put two or three hundredweight of water on board, wetting Eric, who was in the bows, from head to foot, though I fared rather better.

But it was glorious work; we have tried many excitements, and know nothing yet to beat the downhill rush of the canoe as she races into the narrowing V of green-back water between the tossing banks of foam, and you see the big upward curl and the white crest of the sloping waves that wait for you below the hidden ledge, and know as you give her all the speed you can, that

unless you hit that slope end on, in another ten seconds you and your bark will probably be a series of disintegrated atoms "nantes in gurgite vasto."[1]

It is a form of sensation that never palls; and though, as you draw breath after each run, you probably think it was not so very difficult after all, it is really touch and go work all the time, and the least failure to keep her head straight at the critical moment will usually mean an upset, and you are lucky if it does not also mean a smashed boat and possibly a drowned crew.

On this occasion, however, none of those calamities overtook us; but the portages and other delays occupied so much time that the sun had long set before we left our craft safe on the bank, just above the northernmost of the three lakes, and a half-mile walk through ground carpeted with cloudberry brought us to the sæter against the end of which our hut was built.

One of the other pony-drivers, fired no doubt by the success of the canoe-man, had *his* little joke here at our expense. Jomund Sæter stands on a bit of raised dry ground, which is in fact the lowest terrace of a series of glacial deposits, in a perfect network of streams, many of them wide and deep, and all intensely cold. These come pouring down the mountains at either side of a big dale which here debouches at right angles into the main valley of the great lakes.

This man, if man he can be called, came to show us the best way to the hut, and presently went knee-deep through a mighty torrent. We thought we saw a short possible detour which would save us this unpleasantness, and found with a little trouble we had avoided the chilly wade, only however to meet another ice-cold stream a little farther on, which again our guide forded, and which again we with our superior intelligence (not without considerable hard work) dodged. So it went on until the last and biggest torrent, a very respectable river, was reached, and there to our joy was a bridge, and we were still warm and fairly dry.

But imagine our utter discomfiture, and no doubt corresponding

[1] "Nantes in gurgite vasto." = "Swimming in the vast ocean."

mirth on the part of the guide, who had never attempted to dissuade us from all our troublesome wanderings, when we discovered that the farther half of the bridge had been washed away, and there was no help for it but to wade this, the deepest of the streams. and wish too late that we had saved ourselves the trouble of evading the others.

And now the stars were shining brightly, and the long day came to an end in a comfortable little one-roomed hut, which with arrangement we found just big enough to hold the four of us, though for this first night only three occupied it.

G. and I went to the adjoining building and slept with untroubled minds, to be roused at daybreak by the whirr of the cream separator, which in these enlightened times forms a necessary part of almost every sæter equipment.

Things have changed very much in Norway since our first experience twenty years ago, and, strange to say, in some respects for the better. Thanks to the separator, you now get excellent butter almost everywhere, and very good bread is also fairly common. In old days neither of these were obtainable anywhere out of the big towns, and the increase of comfort to English folk wrought by this difference alone is incalculable.

After watching the sæter-girl working at the separator handle for some minutes, my politeness forced me to get out of bed and do it for her. Not to be outdone, *her* politeness caused her to watch with an appearance of grateful interest. But I presently noticed that the milk looked uncommonly rich, and the cream bucket did not seem to increase much, and when I stopped to rest, worn out after about three minutes of back-breaking exertions, she poured the results of my efforts into the machine, and did it all over again; but let us hope she appreciated the good intentions.

CHAPTER VI

On Nord Vand

It may be well to explain that any apparent incoherence or obscurity in the course of this narrative is not my fault. It comes from trying to please the reviewers. When I have ventured into print on one or two previous occasions some of them have thought the beginning dull, and other have critised the end; but they have all agreed that the middle was very very good. "The ibis," they said, "is safest in the middle," alluding, as Lewis Carroll used to teach us, to the well-known habit of that sacred and sagacious bird, which wades up the middle of the Nile, thus avoiding the crocodiles which infest the banks. I have taken their advice; this book is *all* middle; and I do hope the crocodiles will be content.

But these improvements have only been secured at an Alarming Sacrifice. The first 100 pages, and 240 at the end, have been omitted, and I trust no critic will lower himself by saying it is a pity that the rest were not cut out as well. Even a slater of books *can* lower himself, and it is such an obvious scathe. "The obvious"—as some great Frenchman would have said if he had only thought of it—"the obvious is always wrong."

I am sorry about the martyred pages; they contained much that was worth reading, including quite a number of excellent impromptu jokes; these, however, will not be wasted, they have been sent down to the New Forrest, addressed Malwood, and you will see them all the next time a general election comes round. But what chiefly distresses me is the thought that some reader may be tearing his hair in perplexity as to who we are, and why we

have come, and what it is all about, simply because he has not seen those introductory chapters.

Altogether the life of a writer is a very harassed one: for instance, there are all the little Smith boys, whose behaviour is not at all what it should be. They allow people on railway platforms to look into books a great deal to much. Take this one for example: you will notice that it has a very attractive cover, and I feel sure if the public were not allowed to look inside they would buy it, but I saw a man at Clapham Junction the other day read it half through, and then he slammed it down on the top of the *Christian World*, and said it was a swindle, and went off, and I hope got into the wrong train: it is hardly likely he found the right one.

Of course there are ways in which this very trick of letting people look can be utilised to advantage. *Punch* does it to perfection; the paper is so placed in Fleet Street that the public can read every word; then they perceive that there is nothing amusing or instructive in it. Occasionally an impulsive stranger at this stage smashes the window with his umbrella, and is haled off to the Mansion House, but usually he rushes in and buys a copy, arguing that there could not be a paper charged threepence without *some* reason, and so probably there is a bank-note, or a missing word, or a pound of tea concealed somewhere about it. And by the time that man is dead of disappointment another innocent has grown up ready to be imposed on: the profits must be immense, for the population is constantly increasing, and the method of writing *Punch* has long ago been reduced to an exact science.

Then there is Mr. Mudie, who buys books and lends them to other people, and if rumour speak truly, makes a fortune by doing so. Not that he is to be blamed for this; on the contrary, any man most certainly deserves to make a fortune who has found out how to induce any one to return borrowed books. Why, if I could do it, adding them to those I have kept belonging to someone else, I should by this time have one of the finest libraries in England. But all the same, I cannot see any just cause or impediment why Mr. Mudie should not be burnt at the stake.

And the Publisher is another trial. He is one of the best fellows in the world, but he is always wanting me to do something for which I am totally unfitted. "What the public want," he says, "is foolery. Just see how it goes down; look at 'Robert Elsmere,' 'Solomon's Mines,' 'Heavenly Twins': that's the sort of thing they like."

But he is quite wrong. I know much better what the truly thoughtful reader needs; and this work supplies it. It is an airy semi-religious and philosophical family novelette, combining sporting and historical research with scientific instruction, and instilling sound constitutional principles with a suspicion of impropriety suitable alike to young and old. And the illustrations most in demand just now seem to be Glasgovian imitations of Whistler through which the influence of the Beardsley school can be clearly seen. To execute these I am singularly well fitted, from the fact that I have never learnt any drawing. However, it is unnecessary to mention this: just look at the pictures.

He has interfered about all sorts of things. My idea was to bind it in the best Omar Khayyamesque white and gold, sell it for sixpence a copy, and give a new bicycle to every bona-fide purchaser. I thought, and still think, that the sale would have been unprecedented; but of course it has not been tried, and that is the way the best ideas of authors are cramped and shackled in every direction.

In the better time coming an indignant populace will rise in its might and rend the wicked publisher from limb to limb, and put up statues to the good author, and hang them with laurel wreaths and fur boas and sausages and things that the author's wife can make use of; and then the good author will have money in his pocket, and be able to go out to places, and sit down and smoke and dri—think about all the glorious things he means to write, instead of sitting down and writing most inglorious ones with his pocket full of bills for the boas.

In the meantime I shall just go on in the fine old way, inculcating moral lessons by wrapping them skilfully up in a thin

disguise of raspberry jam; it is the only method by which the elevation of the race can be effected.

Thus if you wish to discourage profanity, the best means is to fill your book with bad language; not of course absolutely full, but use say about half as many oaths as the hero of a lady's novel. Then the virtuous reviewers will jump upon you with both feet, and the righteous British Public rub its hands and chuckle, and say, "By George, this fellow's caught it for swearing. Serve him damn well right." And the cause of morality will advance several inches.

There are many great truths concealed in this way in the present pages, but the thing is so artfully done that there is not the remotest chance of you discovering them even if you pore over them day day and night. Nevertheless, you will take them in "through the pores," as it were.

But we were talking of the "Heavenly Twins." I forget exactly what they did; but the one feat that impressed me was that at a tender age they jumped out of the window, went trout-fishing, and *brought back a basketful of trout!* If he assertion had been that they Cast a fly and caught Pollacks, well, one would have tried to believe it; but trout! and English trout! Forsooth. And likewise Go to.

Hitherto it has always been understood that the line—even the fishing-line—must be drawn somewhere, and it has been customary to draw it on this side of babes and baskets full of trout. But even that noble animal the horse, bad as his influence has been on the human race, must for sheer demoralising power give place to the fish, and evidently the New Woman is no more immune than the Old Man. I remember a guileless law-abiding church-going member of society who walked out one day, and by the purest accident became acquainted with a trout (his fly fell on the water behind him as he was making his first cast, and the fish took it), and he came home with his whole character so changed that when the School Inspector at the next examination asked, "Who were the three greatest liars known in history?" the

answer was, "Please sir, Ananias was one, and Mr. M. S. is the other two."

No, baskets are not so easily filled with trout; at any rate not on Nord Vand.

We spent most of the next day in getting things in the hut into good order, and then ran the canoe down the short remaining length of river into the lake, and paddled out to fish.

Bobby of course was the first lucky one—why is incompetence in this world so frequently crowned with success?—and landed a lovely trout, but that evening we only got one more, each of them an ounce under the pound. Curiously enough these were the two smallest we caught during our stay; but though the Nord Vand fish were perfect specimens of all a trout should be, both in the water and the dish, I must confess at once that we never filled a basket with the ease of those amazing Twins, and in fact on several days had difficult in securing enough of the finny prey[1] for our needs. The biggest that came our way were a few between 3 and 4 lbs., but usually they ran from 1 lb. up to 2 ½. The middle of August is really the very end of the good fishing time on these mountain lakes; and the best bags are, as a rule, made in July.

But in Norway, as elsewhere, the rules are tempered with glorious exceptions. For instance, you may often hear it said of a lake that it is useless to fish it except from a boat, and that no trout have ever been caught from the land. These statements are always worthy of attention, and are probably roughly true, but never literally so. In a lake of such a reputation, when the boat could not be found, I caught in four hours' fishing from the shore, one happy 20th of August, fourteen trout (all on fly), of the weights given below; and though there are plenty of lakes with bigger fish, and possibly with a boat the bag might have been even heavier, still it is quite good enough to content most of us:—

lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.	lbs.	oz.
3	0	2	7	2	4	2	0	1	14
2	12	2	6	2	2	2	0	1	13
2	7	2	6	2	1	1	15		

[1] "Finny prey" is good old-established literature; it means fish.

The moral seems to be: Follow local information and advice whenever you can get any; but do not assume that the last word has been said on even such a simple matter as the manners and customs of trout.

Sunday came the next day, and we took things very quietly, going on to the lake about midday. It was beautifully fine and calm, and through the clear green water we could see the "gröna" at the bottom and pick out the likeliest lurking-places for the monsters of the vasty deep. Like most of the lakes of this part it had one open side, with gradually rising slopes and sheltered hollows, in which grew stunted birchwood, the home of fair numbers of ptarmigan and at least one hare. Behind these came the more rugged tops beloved of ptarmigan, and higher still the bare stones and snowfields of the reindeer ground. Our hut also lay on this side, a few minutes' walk from the lake.

But the other, the western shore, rose up almost precipitously from the water's edge, and could only be climbed at certain places. The snow-drifts stretched right down to the lake in many a dark fissure, and the startling contrast made by the black cliffs frowning above was reflected brilliantly from the glassy surface below.

"The great trout were lazily rising,"[1] and dimpling the surface of the lake on every side; and a gentle southern breeze sprang up, and some energetic donkey said, "Let's go down to the other end of the lake and fetch our boat."

The friend to whom we owed our hut had lent us also his boat, but we found on arriving at Jomund Sæter that it had been sent for safe keeping to a superior kind of house which had lately been built for fishermen at the outlet of the lake, about seven

[1] I am compelled by the etiquette of sporting narrative to insert that sentence. Trout on the page of the descriptive writer are always "great." In the basket of the fisherman they are "Oh, a very decent lot of half-pounders." And on the kitchen scales it usually takes about three or four of them to make a whole pound. In Nord Vand they certainly can be "great"; we saw a dead one washed ashore which measured twenty-nine inches, and ought to have weighed from twelve to fourteen pounds. But neither in Nord Vand nor elsewhere do they "rise lazily" any more than the descriptive writer does when he dines with the Lord Mayor. The lazy rising is the day *after* the feed.

miles away. We wanted the boat, because on this high ground the wind often blows so strongly for days together that the sea would sometimes be too big for our little canoe.

But it was an unlucky moment when the notion of fetching it to-day arose. And yet it looked so easy and simple, and altogether exactly the sort of gentle exercise that is usually considered to be appropriate to Sunday.

The breeze blew nicely with us; we hoisted the cowl of the tent as a sail, and skimmed down the lake at a most exhilarating pace, and were soon at a peculiar formation of rock which juts out from the western side about equidistant from either end, and almost connects with a smaller promontory on the east shore; making a narrow passage between the two halves of the lake, the shape being roughly that of an hour-glass.

By this time the wind had increased to a stiffish breeze, and the weather looked so threatening that we had doubts about the wisdom of our behaviour, but thoughts of lunch at the fishing-house kept us going.

The other half was done in record time, but before we quite reached the house there was half a gale blowing, and the waves were so big that we were obliged to run to shore a hundred yards short of our destination, and were pooped by a following sea just as we touched the land.

Then we dismissed dull care and lunched, and presently found our boat and its gear, a heavy old tub, but one that we considered to be capable of standing the great billows that were now rolling in on this end of the lake. Anyhow we objected strongly to going back with our purpose not accomplished, and we hated walking; so we packed Bobby into the bows, and with Eric and John rowing, while I steered with a paddle and put in a stroke at times, we set off.

In the first hundred yards we felt the full force of the gale, and for about ten minutes we hung almost motionless a few yards off shore, and it seemed about an even chance whether we should go forwards or be driven back to our starting-point. But John

«The worn-out tow-rope parted»

and I recalled the glorious days of old when the "dear old College" was doubly Head of the river, and Eric rowed as one who may one day be there, and Bobby chortled with joy as every now and then a big sheet of water came inboard. and between our united exertions we at last made that hundred yards, though it took us twenty minutes to do it.

Then a skilful bit of seamanship, and we ran safely up on the beach near the canoe: and now began the real difficulty. We decided that the big boat needed all of us to send her along, so we must tow the canoe, and the only hope of fighting our way home against this sea lay in getting across to the other side, where we should be to some extent sheltered from the wind. One of the fishermen had come out to see us off, and gave us a hand to start the canoe; with his help, and watching our opportunity, we got clear of the rocky shore without mishap.

It was a pretty bad crossing; the sea was so heavy, that most of the time I had simply to keep her head to the wind, and hard work even that was. It was only by waiting for chances that we could every now and then gain a few yards towards the other side; and

more than once it looked very much as if we should be swamped before I could get her to the wind again. She leaked too, like a sieve, and Bobby could only snatch a few minutes to paddle at short intervals between the constant balings. But at last we began to get under the lee of the hill, and after that it was a mere matter of time, and of course steady work.

In this way we got to the Narrows, but they were on the exposed side again, and the sea was running through them even worse than at the end. So the fight was repeated, and at last we were through, and had turned the headland about fifteen yards, when the tow-rope parted, worn out by the constant friction; and before we could catch her, the luckless canoe was hurled almost high and dry on the rocks.

We did not expect to find much of her unsmashed, but strange to say she had slid so beautifully up a sloping ledge of rock that she was absolutely uninjured, and when Eric and I plunged through the surf to her rescue, we found all she needed was turning upside down in a fissure just where she lay.

Then we ran back in time to prevent any harm to the boat, which John and Bobby had just managed to fend off the rocks, and with a rush we once more braved the stormy sea. Without the canoe we got along better, and at last we were at home again, but it was after nine o'clock before four very penitent Sabbath-breakers were once more dry and warm, and no longer starving. And some of us spent the rest of the evening in sorting out and drying the contents of a couple of fly-books, which had been found swimming about in their waterproof fishing-bags. The latter held as nearly as we could estimate about a gallon each.

Still we had secured our boat, and it was an easy matter next day, when the wind had dropped, to bring the canoe back also, and after this we were never in any great trouble from the state of the water; though it was once or twice too rough for either of our vessels to face. But the prevailing winds during our time were southerly, and therefore the heavy water was more often at the other end.

Some of these mountain lakes can be very dangerous from wind which is apt to come down on them in a hurricane with very slight warning, so slight that inexperienced folk may easily fail to notice it.

Nord Vand is not a bad sheet of water for this, owing to its comparatively open side and end; but I remember one down in the southwest, which lay between tall vertical cliffs, and on which storms of this kind were wont to arise without any previous sign. We were on it one day in a dead calm near one end, and suddenly a great smooth glassy wave came rolling along, so big that the boat seemed quite a long time going up one side and down the other; and two or three more like it followed in quick succession. Then perfect calm again for a minute, and while we were wondering what could have caused the curious upheaval, we saw the surface whitening under a furious squall, and it was all we could do to get safe to shore.

Our explanation was that the water in these narrow lakes confined between the walls of rock is almost as if it were in a hydraulic tube, and a sudden pressure of wind on one end of the lake is felt immediately at the other. The level of the water in such lakes is raised or lowered several inches almost directly according to which quarter the wind blows from; and on one occasion we nearly lost the boat at Nord Vand by a sudden change of this sort. We had left her high and dry the night before, and came down in the morning to find her just preparing to float off "ganz teufelvarts avay."

CHAPTER VII

The Sæter

Our hut is a single room, fifteen feet by ten feet, built on to the north end of a little sæter, and communicating with it by a door, against the lintel of which we all—except Bobby, who is under five feet—knock our heads about three times a day.

The sæter itself consists of one room, about fifteen feet square, which serves for kitchen, drawing-room, and sleeping apartment, and a tiny dairy opening out of it, lighted by a six-inch window, in which the cheese and butter are stored as fast as they are made, and which is used also as our larder. Under this is a wee little cellar in which trout are salted for the winter, and a few tools, spade, mattock, &c., kept, for the very limited farming operations that are carried on.

Our room has no fireplace, but the sæter boasts a beauty, one of the old-fashioned kind, with an iron hook and adjusting rack hanging down the chimney, by which the kettle can be held at any height; and here all the cooking and clothes-drying is done.

The population when we arrived consisted of two boys, Ole and Sivert, very nice boys too, aged about fourteen and twelve, the sons of our landlord, who himself never appeared on the scene, but we presume lived a life of luxurious ease and affluence in his baronial Halls down in the valley. The boys did the cow-herding and catching of trout, and an old woman was in charge of the dairy, and was supposed also to keep our hut tidy, and might even have done it, if she had possessed the iron will of a Bismarck and the strength of a steam-dredger.

It gradually came to our ears during our month's stay that

this dear old lady—who was affectionately known to us as "Miss Meadows"—was the joke of the whole Amt for twenty miles round; and all sorts of pity was lavished by the young and frivolous generation of sæter-girls on those four poor Englishmen who had to get along as best they could with such an unromantic handmaid.

They said she was "an old krone, but half that amount would be a high valuation for her," with many other rude and derisive statements of the like nature.

But she was a cheerful old beldame, and did her best to make us comfortable, and we have no fault to find with Miss Meadows save a slight lack of personal beauty.

After our arrival she used to live at the other sæter a few score yards away, leaving the whole of this building to us, the two boys, and our retainers.

These last were Hans and Michael, a capital pair of native hunters. Hans, a tall man with a venerable aristocratic old face, eagle eyes and nose, and longish hair; Michael was his nephew, a remarkably sturdy specimen of a Norseman, with tremendous shoulders. On Sundays when they strolled about together they looked like an English duke (ideal) and his confidential steward. In real life the resemblance would more probably have been to the confidential steward and his duke.

The last of our establishment was one of the ponies, which we were obliged to keep up here for fetching in hypothetical deer, and various other possible bits of horse labour; he behaved very well, and really on the whole gave us less trouble than he saved, which I take to be quite a record in the annals of horse-keeping.

There was a question of another man to act as hewer of wood, drawer of water, and cook, but we thought that among the four of us too much time and talent would be running to waste unless we undertook the kitchen ourselves, so we decided to begin at any rate without a chef, and see how we got on.

John would certainly not be much overworked, as he was not intending to stalk, but only to catch fishes and mediate.

Bobby would also have opportunities for cookery, as we consider him quite a sufficient danger to society with a banjo and a discursive shot-gun, and sternly suppressed any longings for a rifle. Eric's time was pretty well filled up with the trouble of correcting the errors of his 1100-feet aneroid by Binomial Theorem, and deer-stalking in the intervals; and mine by the perpetual strain of dissuading each one of the Three from imitating the behaviour of either of the other two, a course which must speedily have resulted "in red ruin and the breaking up of laws."

The hut was too small to allow of any disorder, and our first day's work was to find a place for everything, put everything in its place, and threaten sudden death to anybody that moved anything without a special licence. We put up a couple of shelves which were filed with tins and bags of stores, drove innumerable nails into the wall upon which to hang the guns, rods, tools, and clothes, &c., and curtained the windows with muslin to keep in the mosquitoes and prevent them from going off and fetching all their relations to the feast.

The various kinds of food had their names already carefully painted on their dwellings, and a few odd belongings were wrapped in paper and packed away on the rafters. The dizzy height to which law and order attained may be imagined when one of these packages was wound bearing the mystic legend:—

"Pair of worsted gloves; one missing."

Then the table was a worry; it had a trick of dancing violently on two legs at unexpected moments, generally when a full bowl of cream had just been placed upon it, with most disastrous results to cream and amiability.

We finally conquered it by sawing a bit off one leg, marking the points of the compass on its four sides—our door looked due North—and drawing little squares on the floor, into which squares and nowhere else must the feet of that table be placed.

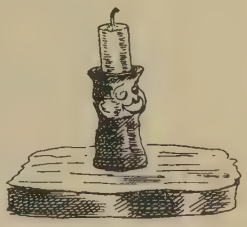
Lastly we held an international conference on the chairs; gave Miss Meadows one; John and Eric took two more; I had a stool; and Bobby ought to have considered himself very well off in

being allowed an old packing-case, but he never exhibited the slightest sign of gratitude for it.

The beds were arranged in the four corners of the room, just leaving enough space for the table and chairs in the middle. Two of these were tall permanent wooden erections with good mattresses, the other two low camp beds which we brought with us.

For bedding we had three reindeer-skin bags, absolutely the finest sleeping apparatus yet discovered; warm, soft, and mosquito-proof. Unluckily there was not a fourth to be had, but Eric managed very well with plenty of blankets; the hut of course being vastly warmer than a tent.

Two candelabra completed our furniture, one (made by the Canadian cleft-stick method) was nailed to the foot of Bobby's bed. The other was portable, a bedroom candlestick designed and executed by Bobby—and I wish it had executed him, for the atrocity of its actions was a perpetual marvel. The very first thing it did was to try to bow solemnly to John, who was not looking at it, and it only succeeded in overbalancing into my soup.



"Designed and executed by Bobby."

And they tried to take away my butter that night, saying I had had more than my share of grease already.

The only drawback to all these comforts was that when once in bed those Three would *not* get up. The time was a matter of supreme indifference to them. All that they cared about was lying in bed after they were called, and if that ceremony had been postponed to lunch time, they would have refused to rise until supper.

Bobby's mattress was an exceedingly springy one, and either owing to this fact or to his eating thrice as much as was good for him, he fell out of bed four times the first week. This annoyed us, because a sudden bang and rumble, like an earthquake under the floor, is disturbing to the nerves when one is fast asleep. Then,

when such a shock had roused us from our peaceful slumbers, it was positively terrifying in the dim light to see a creature like a gigantic Polar bear frantically climbing on to the high bed. This would be Bobby, still securely buttoned up in his reindeer bag, but it took a little time to realise it, and in the meantime one's health and happiness were shattered. So after the fourth exodus we rigged an arrangement of ropes like the shrouds of a ship, which controlled the erratic movements of the sleeper.

«Like a gigantic Polar Bear»

The situation of the sæter, so near the outflow of many streams into the lake, was favourable to the growth of mosquito, and the long-continued wet summer had also encouraged him to even greater industry than usual. The land at the head of Nord Vand is not exactly marsh, because the world here underneath its skin is so remarkably dry that real marshes cannot exist. The formation seems to be entirely gravel and boulders of all sizes, and even when it has been raining hard, the thin coating of soil is dry again almost immediately after it stops.

Still the flat part lying at the mouth of the rivers is so full of little pools and runnels, and moisture-loving plants, that we call it a marsh, and it is sufficiently like one to be frequented by ducks,

sandpipers, redshanks, and ring dotterel, though none of them are numerous; and after we had collected enough of these birds for one day's food, we found a difficulty in annexing any more.

When we opened the door the morning after our curtains were put up, it was pretty evident that a scout had escaped from our fastness by some means, and carried the tidings to his friends. There was a regular queue of mosquitoes, reaching right down to the marsh, just as if it were the Pit-Door of the Lyceum. They walked in in the most orderly way, wiped their feet on the map,[1] hung up their hats, and proceeded to business with all the calm effrontery of a census-taker.

We were obliged on this day and some others to hang a curtain across the doorway like those over the windows, as the only means of curbing their voracity: a device which John called "The Application of the Muslin Order."

But these vicious insects are no fit subject for the jester. If they were, we could better have appreciated a certain guide-book which we had left down in civilisation along with our trousers and white shirts: it was a humorous work, though possibly without "malice prepense." Among miscellaneous statements it remarks, apropos of the mosquito—

"The gnats are sometimes troublesome."

It would be interesting to see this author's companion volume on India. I should expect him to observe—

"When sleeping in the jungle, you will find the tigers rather a tease."

"The bite of a cobra has an irritating effect."

"Be careful not to let the elephants stamp upon your corns."

And so on.

The same book gives also some excellent phrases for the use of travellers; among them we find this, a sentence which it is perhaps unnecessary to mention would be in constant requisition by any well-conducted tourist—

[1] I wrote "mat," but the Printer is a Seer. Somebody certainly did wipe his feet on the map one day; and if it was not a mosquito it must have been Bobby.

"Will you have a glass of gin?" And then there is an asterisk, and a note at the foot thus:

"*There is no gin in Norway." But it gives no suggestions for the further moves in this intellectual dialogue. I should think the next useful sentence for the gin-offerer would be, "Help! Help! Police! Murder! Pull him off!"

While on the subject of gin, here is a device which may be recommended to Sir Wilfrid Lawson and his disciples. It has been tried in the United States, and would no doubt be quite as effective in promoting temperance as any other of the brilliant prohibitive schemes in which they have such confidence. It was in Colorado, if I remember rightly, that they passed a law forbidding the sale of intoxicating liquors, absolutely, *except* for "Medical, Mechanical. or Sacramental purposes." The result—the only one as far as I know—was that one saw exposed for sale the old familiar bottles with beautiful legal labels. GIN, FOR MEDICAL, MECHANICAL, AND SACRAMENTAL PURPOSES ONLY. Which was of course a vast improvement on the former state of affairs.

There was another ingenious piece of legislation, which I believe has been extremely successful up in Nova Scotia. This was to put down "nipping" at bars, and took the form of making it illegal to sell a less quantity than a reputed quart. As about three out of every four of the inhabitants up there rejoice in surnames of Mac—something or other, this exactly suited them; they did not *want* less than a quart, and would not have taken less anyhow; and the fourth one after a little practice fell into their ways, and now all is harmony and empty bottles, and the good cause advances apace.

But little things like these never seem to discourage those worthy people who persist in ignoring what their fellow-creatures *do* think, and acting as if they thought that they think what They think they ought to think.

We brought a flagon of whisky among our various stores, and it was extremely useful in preventing sore feet. I do not know anything better for this purpose than pouring a little into your

boots, and in a country like this where the walking is as a rule extremely trying, you cannot take too much care to prevent any blistering. As for drinking, Bobby is our only abstainer; but in this glorious air, with abundance of delicious ice-cold water, we never felt any call for stimulants, and except on one or two occasions of extreme wet and cold, that whisky got into our feet, but never into our heads.

Alcohol is undoubtedly the greatest curse under which the world is groaning; it has produced those two unmitigated nuisances, the drunkard and the "temperance" agitator, besides saving the lives of a large number of people who would have been much less objectionable if dead. The Government ought annually to buy up the total brew of intoxicants, and deal it out to careful people who would know what to do with it. If this suggestion is adopted, my address will be found at the end of the book, and I will take Pommery 1880, please.

For other drinks we had tea, cocoa, and of course the pride of Norway, coffee. We had bought the best quality of Java, paying about English price for it, *i.e.* 1s. 8d. per lb., and we had no complaints to make against it. But our men only gave 10d. per lb. for theirs, and one Sunday we had a very careful blindfold competition between the two, which resulted in an easy win for the cheaper sort, a smaller and greener berry than ours.

The chief reason why there is practically no drinkable coffee in England is of course that it is very seldom indeed freshly roasted (in Norway it is invariably only roasted when wanted), and besides this I have an idea that our so-called climate is against it. But it is difficult to see why in free-trade England, where the duty is about 2d. a pound, there should be no decent berries under say 1s. 6d., if they can be bought of perfectly excellent quality in protectionist Norway for 10d. Will the Chancellor of the Exchequer be good enough to find out the reason, and get this little matter set right?

Then there was milk, or at least we nominally had the right to demand milk from the sæter, but it was found in practice that for

many reasons it suited us better to take cream. It saved Miss Meadows all the trouble of churning it into butter, and the advantage did not stop there, for if more butter had been made, our landlord would have had the labour of carrying it down into the valley.

And really, when you have grown accustomed to it, there is nothing objectionable about cream, and it makes a capital substitute for milk when one is roughing it in a camp. It goes well with fruit, can be made into passable puddings, and is useful also with coffee, or even tea. Nothing shows more strikingly the culpable daintiness of people at home than the very slight use that is made of this really wholesome beverage. It is the rarest thing in the world to hear a man at a refreshment bar ask for a pint of cream, or to see any one drinking it out of slop basins. Yet such a spectacle was of daily occurence in our humble hut, and our demands began to resemble those of Lay-brother Peter of Broomstick fame: "Bring cream, bring a flagon, a hogshead, a tun."

At last matters arrived at such a pitch that Bobby had only to put his head in at the sæter door during any of our meals, and begin to say "Vær saa snil,"[1] and he was greeted by a chorus from all the Norwegians present, "Oh ja, Cream"—it was the only English word they learnt from us—and another brimming bowl was immediately forthcoming. John suggested that we should write home and tell our wives we "wash up" in cream, but we decided that the poor things were suffering enough already from our absence, and spared them this piece of gratuitous insult.

We do not consider that we are over-rented up here. We have about 400 square miles of deer-forest (and as much more as we can reach), several thousand acres of grouse-moor, twenty or thirty good ptarmigan mountains, a little rough shooting (including a hare), excellent trout-fishing in several lakes and rivers, and a desirable semi-detached residence in the Highlands, with dairy produce of every description, and firewood, for the sum of 10s. 6d. a week per head. And when it is understood that dairy

[1] Be so kind.

produce includes that noble creation the "melka bunka," it is hoped that the reader will grasp the full glory of the situation.

I have not been able to find this word "melka bunka" in any respectable Norwegian book, and take no responsibility for the spelling; but the pronunciation is not far wrong. The thing is a huge tub of milk which has been allowed to stand until the cream has become very thick and slightly sour (I do not know the English equivalent for it); strew it with sugar, skim and eat. It is unnecessary to tell you to be thankful. The gourmet will find a dash of brandy or whisky no bad addition; sherry would probably be even better, but our wine list did not include the latter.

When this delicacy was on the menu, the tub occupied the whole table, and a + was solemnly drawn with a spoon on the surface of the cream to divide it into four equal portions. When the delimitation of frontiers had been carried out to everybody's dissatisfaction—which was our test of absolute fairness—we "drove into the bunka from the tea" (and occasionally from the lunch), and though we never had the shamelessness to ask for a second tubful, we always longed for it.

Calves at feeding-time

CHAPTER VIII

Reindeer

The close-time for reindeer as the laws stands at present (1898) ends on the 15th August, and the shooting season lasts only for one month. This date is possibly the best time that could be fixed, but it always strikes me as being a fortnight too early. Only the biggest bucks have clean horns on the opening day, probably not all even of them; and they rarely begin to show themselves until about the first of September. Where they are concealed meanwhile is a mystery, but it appears to be some secluded spot where "the hand of man has never trod."

The younger deer are more easily discovered, but in this first fortnight it seems a pity to kill them, because their horns are in velvet. And yet you can hardly afford to lose half of the time, when there is always the danger that a continuance of wind from one quarter may clear your ground of deer for possibly all the rest of the season.

The direction of the wind is indeed the chief factor in determining the haunts of the deer; they move perpetually to windward; and if it should chance to blow without much change from one quarter for several days together, they will be found herded together in sometimes immense flocks on that side of the range, while to leeward the fjelds will be practically swept bare of deer for many scores of miles.

If therefore your happy hunting-grounds chance to be on the wrong side for the wind, you may be for weeks without a reason-

able chance of any sport, and very likely, when at last the change comes and the herds begin to drift back to your district, the weather may for days together render stalking out of the question. These facts make most people disinclined to wait for September before going out to pursue.

In our case not only time was of importance, inasmuch as we could not stay to the end of the shooting season, but the commissariat question was also a burning one. We had a sufficiency of certain important stores, such as flour, tea, and coffee, but for meat we were trusting almost entirely to the chase, having only brought a few pounds of bacon and about three days' supply of tinned foods.

So at five o'clock on August 16th, we turned out, Eric with Michael, I with Hans, and climbed the mountains lying respectively to the south-east and north-east of our hut.

It was a most lovely morning: the sun not yet showing over the snowy tops, and the long valley of the lakes lying still asleep, cosily wrapped up in its sheets and blankets of white mist.

At first there was not a breath of air—no movement in the weather-beaten birch-trees through which we climbed, and not a sound to break the stillness except the distant roar of "our Foss." We call it ours, because it looks so near to the hut that at home we should consider it to be at the end of the garden; but as a matter of fact it is almost a mile away, and takes a long quarter of an hour to reach; not even in the Rockies are the distances more deceptive than in this clear rarefied atmosphere.

And now we are above the birches and heather, and even the junipers begin to be feeble folk: next vegetation is reduced to blueberry and bearberry, and in an hour from the start we are up in the region of stones, mosses, and reindeer flowers. Not that the latter are the only flowers that the fjeld can show, but they are among the most frequent, and perhaps attract most attention, both from their connection with the deer and their beauty.

Unfortunately I am no botanist, and can classify very few of the lovely plants that line every crevice, and carpet every scrap of

anything like soil, on the borderland below the bare rock and eternal snow that together form the top to every peak in sight.

The "rens flower" is a ranunculus *(glacialis),* but though rather larger, it resembles most of any English members of the family the wood-anemone and the water crowfoot, and like the anemone its colour varies from pure white, through every shade of pink, to dusky crimson. The deer do undoubtedly eat it occasionally, and it is worth the hunter's while to keep an eye open for freshly-nibbled leaves, among the multitude of other indications for which he must incessantly be on the alert; but I do not think it is a very important article of their diet.

Saxifrages of many kinds abound, the yellow mountain variety being the most common; but here the amateur breaks down, and though I suspect the occurrence of several of the rarer Alpine sorts, such as the Tufted, the Brook, and the bulbous, I am never confident in tacking names on to plants.

One of the most common is a little Stonecrop with a perfect mass of lovely scarlet (almost crimson) six-petalled stars, and there is another Sedum *(rhodiola?),* a paler pink, with five petals. These two, covering as they often do quite a large surface, are wonderfully pretty.

There are white Stonecrops and Whitlow grasses, which brighten the stern grey rocks almost everywhere up to 5000 feet, and butterworts *(pinguicula),* most beautiful flowers, and as far as I can tell, of at least two sorts, but I do not think the great Irish variety grows here.

And in a few places only, lovely little gentians, intensely blue, the pet of all Alpine flowers. In some other parts of Norway I have seen them very numerous, but apparently they are capricious.

Then still on the border line there is a very pretty toad-flax, quite common, and tormentils, and rock-cress; and a little lower a most handsome cranesbill, which as far as I can see is simply the Meadow Cranesbill, but can that variety flourish at such an altitude? Lower still there are Campions and yellow Mountain Violets, blue Campanulas, and big Monkshood, and many sorts of

ferns to rejoice the eye; and multitudes of berries to please both sight and taste.

But now we have left all these behind, and are sitting down for our first spy of the season against a rocky ledge below the great snow-field of Nordmands Hö. The furrowed slopes of Sne Hö across the valley are spread out before us like a map, and for ten minutes or more we search them methodically ridge by ridge, snow patches especially, for there most easily will the new tracks of our quarry be detected; then we try the valley itself, and lastly, our own side of it, slowly making all the visible terraces safe until the jutting shoulder above us prevents any further view.

And not a scrap of encouragement do we get, no spoor even of the most ancient date; "sign" of course can almost always be seen on the snow, but none of it recent. But the rest has been delightful, and now that the business of looking for deer is finished, take a little pleasure.

The sun is up now. Look down towards the lake, and see him rolling back the bed-curtains and waking all the lower world with a merry breeze. The great masses of white begin to break up and drift into the side valleys; and here up our own dale comes a creeping wreath of cloud that looks as if it would wrap us and everything else in its cold embrace, but before it has reached our feet, the sun peeps over the mountain-top—and Whiff—the mist melts; hangs a moment or two in the most sheltered nooks, and vanishes; and the glorious Norwegian day has fairly begun.

How the snow glares. I notice that even Hans suffers from it. though after a few days' practice the eyes become able to stand it without much inconvenience. But at first I simply shut them tight and trust to Hans to keep a good look-out whenever we are obliged to cross a piece of snow. This however we do as seldom as possible, for the reindeer is a watchful beast, and a man on a snow-patch is a very conspicuous idiot indeed.

And so we go on, ever climbing higher and higher, and at intervals stopping to spy out the new ground that comes into our ken, and still there is nothing; not a hoof-mark, not a moved stone to

excite attention and make us hope; and the wind is blowing steadily now, and from the quarter that we least like, that is South.

Our ground is most favoured by a continuance of northerly airs, and a week of South wind is sufficient generally to clear out all the deer until the change comes.

And now at last we are over the ridge, and looking into the next valley. A splendid wilderness of rocks and cold green lakes, with masses of ice and snow floating across them, as at short intervals they break off from the overhanging drifts that wall them round. But it does not look as likely for deer as the ground we have passed, and the most careful spying shows us nothing to revive drooping spirits.

So we keep bearing Southwards to get the benefit of the wind, and a little before midday are on a flattish plateau of tumbled stone which form a sort of pedestal, from which springs the actual peak of Nordmands Hö, a few hundred feet higher still.

And now at last there is encouragement, though not anything very glorious. Hans points; and there at the foot of the great snow slope which covers all the northern side of the top, are four deer, but "only," as he sadly says, "only small." They are a mile away, and travelling fast; and we fear have been disturbed by some other villainous hunter. However we pursue, and soon after the deer have mounted the long white hill and disappeared over the top, we are reading their spoor at the bottom.

It tells us plainly what the glass has already told us doubtfully, that there is a young buck, two hinds, and a calf; and we decide to go on and try at any rate to get within easy sight of them. But it is not to be, and after following the spoor for four hours, and finding that another buck had joined the party, we finally lose the tracks on a wide stretch of desert rock, and make our way home without ever seeing them again, tired and stiff, but extremely happy, and all the better for our wanderings in the health-giving air of the fjeld.

Such a day is likely to be the ordinary experience of the reindeer stalker in any part of Norway that can be found now; the hunters

are numerous and the deer are not, and the big ones are undoubtedly much scarcer than they were twenty years ago.

Frightened deer, especially if the fright has been from scent, travel great distances before they settle down again, and curiously enough, about the same time that we gave up the chase, Eric, who was also returning home empty, saw five deer, "answering to the description of the accused" fleeing over his mountain four miles from where we lost them. They may of course not have been the same, but all the circumstances went to show that they were, and it gives some impression of the difficulties attending the hunting of this wary and nervous creature. Deer that have been alarmed by sight are however much less scary, and will sometimes begin contentedly to feed again or even lie down, as soon as they have put a good thick hill between themselves and the object of their distrust.

At the beginning of the season one generally finds three days a week about as much as either master or men feel equal to, but after the first week everybody is in splendid condition, and we come back from a twenty-mile walk over these unprincipled rocks, tired indeed, but only so pleasantly tired that a bathe and good supper make us feel that this is at last the ideal life, and we wake ready for the same, or a harder day, next morning.

We have about four good days' stalking in easy reach from the hut, or by taking to the boats, and making a rather longer out, we can reach ground for two more hunts; so we can pick our place according to the wind.

We spent a lovely day in what is called resting, which meant working about three times as hard as one ever does in England—baking, shooting the home covers for ducks and shore birds, with extremely meagre results, and having some capital fun fishing.

It is quite a circus to watch Bobby at one end of a line and a three-lb. trout at the other, and there is always considerable chance of the trout getting the best of it, but so far human intelligence—I suppose a boy *is* human, though it often appears open to discussion—has triumphed.

I saw a man once in Ireland taking a fish off a cross-line, and it gave a sudden wriggle, and slipped overboard with the hook still in its mouth. He grabbed at it, but only succeeded in catching one of the other hooks, very firmly. His face and language while that trout played him might have made angels weep, but had quite a contrary effect on his neighbours and acquaintances, who being *Angleri, non Angeli,* laughed themselves speechless during the minute or two that the show lasted.

A cross-liner deserves a worse fate than this, but considered as an instalment of retribution, it left nothing to be desired.

We have spent some time on of days in perfecting an oven in the bank just in front of the sæter. It is a massive stone construction, with a movable door; underneath and behind runs a flue; and when a fire is lighted inside the chamber, and also in the fireplace underneath, it roars like a furnace, and soon makes the big stones hot enough to bake. At first we put the dough on to the stone shelf which forms the bottom, but there was considerable waste of room by this plan, so we sacrificed the big eight-pound biscuit tin, and used its own lid and another to make two shelves. By this method we can bake twelve half-pound loaves at once; the tin being filled and put bodily into the stone oven when hot enough; forty minutes' baking usually turns out some very decent bread.

This, however, necessiated a rearrangement of stores, for our precious biscuits had to be put into an air-tight place, and John, who had undertaken the housekeeping department, was heard explaining to Eric—

"If you want any biscuits, they are in the raisin canister, and I've put the raisins into the sugar-bag."

"Then what have you done with the sugar?"

"Oh. you'll find that in the marmalade jar."

"And where on earth's the marmalade?"

"Well, that's in Bobby; at least most of it is; and I don't think it's much good trying to get it back. I hope you fellows are aware of the pace things are going. We only brought six pots of

marmalade, and three of them have gone in the first week, so how long do you suppose the other three will last?»

With one voice we answered, "Three weeks," for we detected an unpleasant look of "Rations" about John that was not to be encouraged. *Dum vivimus, vivamus,*[1] is our motto: *Cras ingens iterabimus æquor,* and do all sorts of gallant deeds, but we are not crass enough to begin as long as there is any jam left.

"The resources of civilisation," went on John, gazing gloomily into the chocolate-box, "are not yet exhausted, but they doosid soon will be unless Bobby is muzzled."

All, fermented!

We had, for several of the first days spent in the country, considerable success in the economical line, bye telling Eric that things were "fermented." At one of the stations on the way up he was provided with some very handsome preserved fruit, which, either intentionally or by accident, had a taste of this kind about it; for which he conceived an exaggerated aversion.

We marked him for our prey, and for long afterwards if there was any particularly good dish which did not look likely to stay the course, it was only necessary to sniff suspiciously and murmur something about "a curious sort of fermented flavour," and one helping at any rate was saved.

But he has grown wiser now; and remembers that as a child he

[1] "Dum vivimus, vivamus." = "Let us live while we live."

used to be told that a thing was "too rich," and always noticed that his elders thereupon proceeded to devour it with gusto; and the "fermentation" device is played out.

Bobby, however, we can treat with brute violence, and when he clamours for anything his superiors want, we behave as did a certain stately butler of my acquaintance. A guest towards the end of dinner asked for champagne, and as it chanced, the last opened bottle was just empty. He marched up to the host, and in a whisper that was heard the whole length of the table said—

"Captain P. wants some more champagne. Shall I open another bottle, or appear to take no notice?"

And was quite unabashed when a mighty chorus of "Appear to take no notice" went up.

Things have sufficiently settled down to enable John to devote a few minutes to the Muses; and the beautiful lines which follow are the first result of his efforts:—

TAKSKARRAHAR[1]

When "the Major"[2] has vented his ultimate snore,
And Bobby, as usual, has crashed on the floor,
And Eric turns round for just one quiet doze—
For half-heated oven, and semi-dried clothes
Have harassed his rest—like the God from the Car,
We arise with our war-cry of *Takskarrahar!*

A tub in the brook; a toilette *à la mode ;*
Then the roasting of coffee perfumes our abode,
And the big Stegepande[3] is stoked up with kjød,[4]
Fiske,[5] kindneys, and bacon, with eggs when they're good,
Salt and sugar in tins, and our Smør[6] in a jar:
The signal for Spise[7] is *Takskarrahar!*

Then the stalkers right gaily set forth to the Fjeld;[8]
First prances "the Major," his ardour unquelled;
With Hans—like a sanctified Pigg[9]—in advance,

While Michael leads Eric the doose of a dance,
Till the Store Bocks fall with just one bullet scar,
And the mountains re-echo with *Takskarrahar!*[10]

While the Skald and the Weakling[11] embark on the lake;
The trout are too dainty: the flies do not take:
So they trail wicked minnows, and scull till all's blue,
And are thankful to capture an Örret[12] or two.
"There's one on!" "No, he's off!" "No, you've got him. Ha! Ha!"
"He's a ripping three-pounder! Oh! *Takskarrahar!*"

Then comes supper.—Ye gods! as our teacups we quaff,
What pailfuls of Flöde![13] What oceans of chaff!
No linen: no glass: 'twixt the courses no wait
(Save when each man is absent while cleaning his plate),
Trout, venison, stewed apples: then soup from afar:[14]
Then the Banjo, and Bed, and so *Takskarrahar!*

A slack day. What hinders a raid on Norddal?[15]
Their delicatessen, and big Spise sal,[16]
The flesh-pots of Egypt, we'll "brosier"[17] them now,
For the settlers all flee from our conquering prow,
While the Colonel he moodily gnaws his mousta-
Che at the Jomund-ry slogan of *Takskarrahar!*

(Verse dedicated to the younger members of the expedition, and more particularly to Minimus:)

O young generation, at greybeards you flout:
"When we were your age—" but we're met with "Get out!"
"Don't be silly, Dad," 's all you vouchsafe in reply:
Make the most of your chance, for your time's drawing nigh:
You've a reckoning to settle, my lad, with your Ma,
When you get safely home, 'twill be *Takskarrahar!*[18]

(Farewell verse, added at our "Positively Last Appearance:")
Farvel, Jomund Sæter! Farvel, fjeld and Vand,

Farvel, honest Northern men, true heart and hand,
Whose kind simple manners, unstained by one vice,
Have made of your country a bleak Paradise;
Farvel, land of rens, elk, trout, skeeter and Bar,
Farvel, Gammel Norge, and *Takskarrahar!*

It as been thought desirable to add a few explanatory notes to this composition; but remember there are many poems in the world which no number of notes will render intelligible:—

[1] *Takskarrahar.* This word has certainly a malignant appearance, but it means nothing bad; in fact, strictly speaking, it does not mean anything at all. It is derived from the extra-polite form of thanks, "*Tak skal De have*" (Thanks shall you have), which, when hastily pronounced by foreign tongues, has a tendency to sound like *Takskarrahar.*

[2] "The Major." This must not be taken for a military title, though as there is a Colonel at the other end of the lake, we saw no reason why we should not have a field-officer of our own, a Major of Jomund-ry, in fact. But it is really used to distinguish the eldest member of the clan.

[3] Stegepande = frying-pan.

[4] Kjöd = meat (pronounced something like k-yeud).

[5] Fiske = fish (plural).

[6] Smör = butter.

[7] Spise = a meal.

[8] "Then" is poetic licence. The stalkers had usually finished their humble breakfast, and "set forth to the Fjeld" about two hours before the Skald deigned to grace the waking world with his lordly presence.

[9] "Pigg." Hans certainly had at times a wonderful resemblance—though glorified—to Leech's portraits of the immortal James: particularly to the one in the cucumber-frame.

[10] The poetic licence has expired. We do *not* yell *Takskarrahar* or anything else on the mountains.

[11] Hans's nice old-fashioned name for Bobby.

[12] Örret = trout.

[13] Flöde = cream.

[14] Soup, whenever we had it, was the last course.

[15] The fishing-house at the northern end of the lake.

[16] Spise sal = dining-room.

[17] "Brosier" = to eat out of house and home. Eton slang. The Skald (who is a Rugby man) has inserted this word in a spirit of revenge for our occasional use of terms which he affects not to understand. We have endeavoured to propitiate him by interlarding our conversation with allusions to Barby Church, Crick run, and Big Side, but so far without success.

[18] The word is here intended to convey the sound of "rapid applause." Consult the history of Master Alexander McStinger, as related by Mr. Charles Dickens.

CHAPTER IX

Stalking

In many ways the reindeer is to me a more attractive creature than his Scotch cousin, but what more than anything else commends him is the fact that one is allowed to take a part in all the early acts of the performance, and is not merely First Murderer in the concluding scene of a stalk.

I have always had a sneaking sympathy with the sportsman of tradition, who, after meekly following a haughty gillie and obeying orders for several hours, had the rifle put into his hand with the words, "There's the stag, shoot him," and wrathfully exclaimed, "Shoot him be hanged; shoot him yourself."

Norwegian hunters have not yet been cultivated into such a state of rather artificial perfection, and though I know no pleasanter companions as a class than the Scotch keepers, it is inevitable that work with them should be more cramped and conventional than in these Northern wilds.

The Highlander has—usually with great reason—a genuine though admirably concealed contempt for the opinions of the Southron, and is too much of a gentlemen to go through any pretence of taking his advice; but the Norseman has an equally genuine, though I fear often not equally well-founded contrary belief in the fjeld-craft of his English employer; and the very fact of not being able, as a rule, to converse fluently with each other makes the scraps of consultation much more important and interesting to both sides.

Another great difference is in the matter of spying; the Scotchman is a professional and an expert; and if after using the telescope he says there are no deer, it is as a rule waste of time for the amateur to try. But the Norseman is, after all, only an amateur like yourself, and probably using for the first time a telescope to which you are well accustomed.

So besides providing Hans or Michael with a glass, I always carry one myself, and roughly on the average I find twice as many deer as they can. With the naked eye conditions are reversed, and probably the native beats me three times out of four. But the fact of feeling that the chances of success depend so largely on one's own skill and attention, and that the stalker regards one as a working partner in the concern, gives special zest to the hunting of the rens.

The warm South wind continued to blow, and the rivers and streams came roaring down with alarming increase of volume; even the lake rose nearly a foot one night, and we went near to lose the boat, which was so heavy that we had idly neglected to pull it far enough out of the water, and found it well afloat and just starting for America or somewhere when we arrived.

So it was not very hopefully that Michael and I clambered up the stony slopes of Simle-tind for our second day's stalking. But I am getting old, and long past the stage of being miserable unless I kill something; years ago things were different, but now it is sufficient if I may climb a Norwegian mountain on a glorious day like this, and all sorts of wonders in colour, light and shade, clouds and rocks and living things, which in earlier days I saw but never looked at, are now a delight.

The sounds too, or rather perhaps the marvellous stillness, are a constant joy after the restless buzz and rattle of what we are pleased to call civilisation. There are very few creatures that make any noise on the fjeld, and it is not till one of them speaks that you realise how extremely quiet it must have been before. Most likely the first is a raven, so far away that you can barely see him, and yet his hoarse voice is startlingly distinct, and you know

that every deer in range of that ill-omened cry is on the alert and looking out for danger. Then comes that extraordinary vocal effort, between a croak and a snore, that an old cock ptarmigan imagines to be crowing, and whirr! here he comes from the rock above close past your head, to alight again twenty yards below. Now look about where he came from, and presently (that is, if you have caught the trick of seeing them) there are the whole family;[1] not that even with practice will you detect them all at once, but look long enough in the right place, and they will gradually materialise like the goblins in "Rip Van Winkle," and you will become aware that some of those fragments of quartz are quartz, and some are ptarmigan, and much of that grey lichen is lichen, but a little here and there is ptarmigan, and even then a discovered bird will sometimes change under your very eyes, and become again a moss-grown fragment of white stone.

They are rather young and very inexperienced in the ways of the world, or they would not sit, as they generally do in this country, within a few feet of wicked man. But no doubt this is the first time they have met him, and even when he begins to throw stones, which bounce and batter all about them, they only run away conversing with mild surprise in a gentle cheep.

Here comes a more cheerful and friendly little bird, a wheatear, looking much too pretty and fragile for these stern solitudes; he will talk to you, and go part of the way with you, and if you sit down to lunch, it is odds that he invites himself to the feast, and when finally he is obliged to go and look after his own business, he has convinced you that you really must be rather nice to make such a favourable first impression.

And on the highest coldest tops of all, there is sure to be a flock of snow-buntings, twittering and playing in the snow, and evidently enjoying themselves amazingly. It is all delightful; let us sit down in the warm sun, and—*Ping*—

[1] This depends rather on the age of the brood. Papa does not associate much with his children while they are in the nursery, but rejoins the family when they are grown up.

Well, I declare. A mosquito!

A mosquito? a dozen, a score, a hundred; that this same warm sun has enticed from their native valley to prevent life becoming too pleasant up here. No more sitting in the warm sun, thank you; we will move on again, for they are not practicularly active in the sharp air, and it is only when stationary in a sheltered spot that they trouble one on the mountains.

Look down at the snow-field we are crossing: it is dotted with insects, small flies of many kinds, daddy-longlegs, earwigs, humble-bees, and butterflies. What they have come for I cannot imagine, unless it is to get away from the trout; but there they generally are, and often in quite large numbers. Snails too, with a shell, are common on the tops, though not actually on the snow, and these also always seem to be rather out of their element; while lower down, black slugs abound as if the place were a kitchen garden.

And now we have arrived at the edge of a cliff with a sheer drop down to a desolate valley, and a new sound comes swelling up from the depths. The warm wind has wrought a marvellous change, and yesterday's brook is to-day a raging torrent, with huge slabs of ice and snow breaking off and crumbling into the rapidly-rising water, as it undermines the snow bridges that have spanned it all the year. If this sort of weather lasts, not only will there be no deer hereabouts, but there will be no possibility of getting about the country until the weight of snow has melted and the streams begin to shrink again.

There is no crossing here, so we try westward over the flat hill-top. It is a curious scene, this huge expanse of bare fantastic stones, perched some of them in most extraordinary positions on the backs of others, and looking like men, like deer, mushrooms, altars, hats, witches, any and every kind of thing, and now and then a long row of flat ones set on end with a gruesome resemblance to tombstones.

It was not easy to come up the other side, and walking across the so-called flat was worse, but going down is heart- rending, and

at intervals knickerbocker-rending also. The stones are all loose, and extremely angular; if they were also slippery, walking on them would be almost impossible, but fortunately they generally have a surface which gives a good grip to the foot, though occasionally there are patches which are polished by sliding snow; these, however, are not lose, so that with care they can be managed.

Sometimes, however, it happens that a sharp frost sets in while the stones are still wet from rain, mist, or thaw, and then the most efficacious method of treating them is to stop in the valley. But to-day things are normal, and we slowly descend a few yards of the western slope, and sit down for a spy.

Seen from below, or from the opposite mountains, this part of the range looks merely like a rough and precipitous hillside with no particular shape, but from above it shows itself as two steps or terraces, fairly flat, half a mile wide, and with steep, almost impassable, cliffs between them. This is the sort of ground the solitary "stor bock" loves, and here, if anywhere, we hope to discover him.

The terraces face about south-west, and there is therefore not much snow on them, while on the lower one especially there are many patches of what may be almost called grass—green stuff at any rate of divers univiting descriptions—which the reindeer in the simplicity of his heart thinks luxury, and on which he becomes nobly fat.

But here and there there are drifts of snow, which lie a little sheltered from the wind and sun, and as I turn the glass on one of these, something moves—a horn first and then a head, and a whole deer, walking on to the white patch at the very moment when I have the luck to be looking at it. Another follows, and another; and now on the stones near by I see a couple of calves, and there to the right more deer—one, two, three, four, five—ten in all, though at a mile and a half it takes some little time before we are sure of their numbers.

They are in capital ground for a stalk, and the wind is good; the only drawback is that they seem terribly restless, and are feeding, as at this time of day—about ten o'clock—they often do,

in a most spasmodic and fidgety manner. They snatch a few mouthfuls at a run, and are constantly working uphill, almost faster than a man could go.

So we hurry down towards them as quickly as the ground will let us, stopping now and then to keep them in our view, and at every halt finding them much farther up the hill, and getting to much less favourable ground. But we are gaining a little on them all the time, and are near enough to make out that two at least are fairly good bucks, when they disappear from our sight over the ridge.

It takes us ten minutes to reach the same place, and then, where are the deer? Clean gone; not a sign of them anywhere, and on these bare rocks no chance of tracking them. The likeliest place seems to be a narrow pass in front, and as the ground there is covered with snow, we shall at any rate be able to see whether that has been their line.

There are no tracks in the pass, but while we are searching a most unwelcome surprise comes in the shape of a native hunter. He also has seen the deer, and was in fact hurrying to join us when the herd so mysteriously vanished into space. He could not of course tell that we were not his compatriots, and among them the motto in deer-stalking is, "The more the merrier." They shoot for meat, and obviously if three or four hunters can to some extent surround a herd, the chances of collecting "kjød"[1] are greatly increased.

A good sportsman, not English, whom I met this year, told me that he once came up with a party of four natives who had just found a large herd of deer, and invited him to join in their fray. He followed out of curiosity, and saw the whole performance. The deer were well placed for the hunters, and the whole four got within shot at different points, and then, as he said, "the battle began." They blazed away from magazine rifles as long as a deer was in sight; and when there is a herd to fire at, the meat-hunter does not waste his time on individuals, but shoots, as he most expressively phrases it, "paa Slump."

[1] Kjød (modern Norwegian "kjøtt") = meat.

"Slump" is a lovely word; vastly superior, I think, to our rather mild "brown."

When the untouched deer were safely over the frontier into Siberia, and the volley-firing was concluded, there were two deer lying dead, and three limping away with broken legs in the distance, and probably others also body-hit, all of which wounded beats would die, and none of them be brought to bag.

Our present friend seemed to take it for granted that his assistance would be prized, and, much to my annoyance, Michael appeared to accept the situation with perfect cheerfulness, and they were soon deep in conversation about bridges, and kroner, and boats, and cheeses, just as if there were anything on the face of the earth at that minute except reindeer.

I fumed and fretted to no purpose for a space, and then determined to lunch, and keep on lunching, until our visitor departed, if it took me all day. At any other time he would have been a most interesting study, for he was a capital type of the hard-working native hunter, whose prodigious energy and endurance meets with such insignificant reward.

He was dressed in light yellowish garments of some thin material, much variegated with divers sorts of dirt, without which they would I think have been far too conspicuous on the fjeld. His weapon was a very old-fashioned military breechloader, slung over one shoulder, while from the other a sort of loose-jointed pantomine telescope was hung. These two cross-straps would have been quite sufficient encumbrance to most people, but under them he had two more, one supporting a huge rolled-up bundle which was no doubt bed and perhaps wardrobe, and the other a bag, which was evidently kitchen and larder. In his hand he carried a tremendous iron-shod alpenstock, an implement of doubtful utility, but perhaps one that gives additional safety on snow to a solitary hunter. His boots were a museum of leather patches, after the manner affected by all Norwegians for fjeld work; as to which there is something to be said in another chapter. Altogether a soldier in full marching order would be lightly and elegantly

equipped in comparison with him, yet here he was cheerfully facing storm and sunshine, frost and rain, and climbing up and down these very grievous rocks for many days together on the chance of a shot, which, to judge by the appearance of his rifle, would probably be a miss, and if successful would be worth a pound, or say at the utmost thirty shillings.

However, I only began to admire after we parted; while he sat there munching his frugal meal I merely regarded him with hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, but certainly not with envy.

Presently Michael led the conversation to telescopes, and borrowing our friend's instrument, gazed all over the heavens and earth for a long time; said it was a "Meget god glas" (very good glass), which I am convinced was base flattery, shut it up, hung it on its owner again, yawned, and rose to go. The native rose also, and so did I, and in my best Norse declared, "I will not hunt with any other jæger, either English or Norwegian," the latter half of the sentence being calculated, I fondly hoped, to prevent injury to any one's feelings.

I trust it had that effect, but anyhow Michael and our visitor smiled politely; shook hands; we all took off our hats, and once more the Rover was free and aboard the lugger!

But it was now an hour since we last saw the herd, and I had given up much hope that we should ever find them again; so life was anything but rosy. We punged down into the dark ravine on the edge of which we had been sitting, and began to climb the opposite rocks.

Then it was that Michael confided to me that just after we forgathered with the jæger, he had seen a single deer moving towards a little valley a short distance above us, and had been on thorns the whole time lest the adversary should also detect it. Hence his incessant conversation on extraneous subjects, and hence also, I very much fear, his diplomatic borrowing of that rickety telescope.

In another ten minutes we were at the entrance to the little valley, but just before we reached it I looked back, and to our

"Some dots which did not look like stones"[1]

left, beyond the gloomy chasm we had crossed, far away on a big snowfield which stretched down to the head of the ravine, were some dots which did not look like stones.

The glass soon settled the matter; they were a herd of ten, no doubt the same we had so unluckily lost, lying down for their midday rest, in a perfectly unapproachable spot about two miles away.

This rest, from about 12.30 to 1.30, is a very regular habit of the reindeer, and one which must always be taken into account. When you know where your deer are, it can often be turned to advantage; but while still searching, you are almost certain to do more harm than good if you ignore it, and go blundering about over the country. Deer on the move, and upright, are difficult enough to

[1] The dots in the drawing are out of all proportion to the size of the snow-field, but it was necessary to make them visible to the reader without the aid of a stalking-glass.

discover before they detect you; but when they are lying down among stones it is hopeless to expect to find them; it is in fact by no means easy to keep sight of them even when you know their situation.

Often they will take this period of quiet in the ground where they happen to be feeding, but if the sun is very hot, as it was to-day, they will generally betake themselves to the nearest snow, and when, as in this case, they choose the middle of a big piece, there is no chance of getting near them. All you can do is to stay quiet and watch them until the time is up—they seldom exceed the hour—and hope for better luck when they begin to move about again.

In the meantime there was our single deer; and just in the expected place we caught sight of his horns—alas, only small—over a ledge of rock.

By merely stooping we walked up to within eighty yards, and could, but for the wind, have crept within twenty, but we were as near the line of danger as I cared to go, so stayed quiet and waited for a clear shot.. The rocky ridge was, however, very continuous, and the deer fed slowly along behind it, and never showed more than its head, which was lifted every minute for that watchful gaze around that makes approach so often difficult.

At last came a small depression in the ledge, and here I had an unobstructed view of head and neck.

The neck is as deadly a spot as any, but even at so short a distance as eighty yards it does not seem a very large target. Moreover, for some reason or other, it is much easier to miss a partly-hidden beast than one in full view. However, it looked probable from the lie of the ground that there would be no better chance, and the deer was feeding all the time nearer to the zone of doubtful wind, so I hardened my heart, aimed carefully, and saw him drop like a stone.

A .303 cordite cartridge makes no smoke and very little noise. but it was enough to disturb the herd across the ravine, and when I turned to look, they were galloping at full speed up the long

A neck shot

stretch of snow towards the top of Simle-tind. But they were not desperately frightened, and halfway up they halted and began to look about them. Then they went on at a more leisurely pace, and right at the top stopped again, and presently one or two were lying down, so we had good hopes of coming to an understanding with them a little later.

But first there were the obsequies here to attend to, and on getting to our quarry, we were sorry to find that "he" was, after all, a hind. I do not know how much experience a man needs before he can distinguish with certainty between the hinds and younger bucks. I only know that I cannot do so unless I have a very much better view of them than I ever got of this, and I doubt if any one can tell the difference at a glance. The big bucks are unmistakable, and so are the calves and milch hinds, but when it comes to hurried or imperfect glimpses of young bucks and barren hinds, the difficulty is very great.

Anyhow it was meat—kjöd—and kjöd was what we chiefly needed at this time, so we did not repine much, but performed the usual ceremonies: walled in the carcase, built the necessary cairns for guide-posts, and then set off after the Ten.

They had disappeared by this time, while our attention was off them, but this did not worry us, as there was much snow all about the top, and they always prefer to travel on that if there is any, so we knew we should find their spoor when we were up there.

The precipitous gully was not practicable where we stood, and to go back to our old crossing would have been far out of the way, so we followed it up to the head, and then worked round. This had been an exceptional year for heavy snows in the early summer, and the ravine showed it in a most remarkable way. The bottom of it was choked many feet deep with huge masses that had broken of and slid down from the lip of the surrounding cliffs, and where these fractures were recent, we could see that we were walking on twenty feet of snow, in a place where Michael assured me there would frequently be none at all this time of year.

Another proof, if any were needed, was to be found in the skins of the deer; quite a large number of those we saw had still patches of winter coat about them, which in ordinary years would have been shed.

As we passed the place where the usual stream ran out from the mass of snow, a bird got up between the frozen banks and flew down the watercourse; a Turnstone, if I ever saw one; but what it was "doing in this galley" is beyond my powers of imagination. It was not far (for a winged creature) to the lake in the valley below, and the shores there were a suitable haunt enough for it, though I have never seen one on these inland waters. Still, there would be nothing astonishing in its presence there, but up in this dreary abode of snow and rock I consider it was out of place. Probably it was deranged.

Time had slipped away rapidly, and it was five o'clock before we reached the top of the great snow-field, and began to follow the plentiful spoor of our ten deer. A long and weary dance they

led us; sometimes going fast, sometimes showing that they had stopped to rest again, and perpetually making what seemed useless deviations from a road to anywhere. But on the whole they pointed for our own valley, and we were constantly getting a little nearer home. Moreover, we knew that just ahead lay a very favourite feeding-ground, and as we approached it and began the northern descent, we had evidently gained considerably on the herd, and knew that at any moment they might be in full view.

Now we were half-way down the hill, and in front of us stretched a long steep wreath of snow, on to the top end of which the footprints led us, and then for some unknown reason they turned suddenly to the right.

The fresh tracks of a herd are very conspicuous on snow, especially on a hot day, and more so when the sun is getting low in the sky, and the shadows help to emphasise the depressions. So that we had little difficulty in seeing that they now pointed up-hill again, and we soon picked out the winding ribbon of spoor far above us to the right. This was a little disconcerting, for we had quite made up our minds that the herd was making for the pasture below us to the left; but the path of duty evidently led up the hill again, and thither we took our way.

We had hardly gone twenty yards in the new direction when Michael suddenly dropped flat on the snow, and, as I followed his example, I saw the herd standing still on the drift some four or five hundred yards to our *left*, and on our own level; they had made this curious detour up to the right and then wheeled down hill again, passed below us, and taken a sweep up to the left, presumably to make sure of safety before feeding.

And so we were defeated after all. I put the highest sight and blinked at the biggest buck as they stood for perhaps twenty seconds gazing at us; but it looked a forlorn chance, and was not according to the rules anyway, and before I could make up my mind whether to try a shot, they turned and galloped off up the long white hollow with a perfect cloud of flying snow behind them. Once more they stood at the top of the snow-field half a

mile away, and stared again for a time at the unwelcome visitors who, I fear, had spoilt their supper; and then—the beautiful creatures were gone into the blaze of the setting sun, and we saw them no more.

We tracked them, however, far enough to find that they had had enough of Simle-tind, and concluded that it was no place for respectable reindeer in these hard times. They had gone down the steep western cliffs to the terrace where we first found them, and from there down the only practicable route to the bottom, and across the big river to the opposite range. And we sadly followed their example, as far at least as the river, and along that made our weary way home, after thirteen hours of pretty hard walking.

CHAPTER X

A Picnic

The Hest had up to this time been rather a sinful extravagance on our part. He came up here provided with a riding saddle as well as his pack gear, and we had fondly hoped that Bobby would scour the country upon him and collect eatables from far-off haunts of man. But as soon as it became apparent that riding meant walking, and that the furious career of the Comanche Indian, with one foot in the stirrup and the rest of him in a horsehair loop, was impracticable, Bobby renounced equitation, and the Hest has hitherto done no work.

So it was with great satisfaction that we sent him to fetch in the slain deer, and the rest of us went out for a day with the ryper.

This bird, the skov-rype, as distinguished from the ptarmigan or fjeld-rype, is very much like his British cousin the red grouse; so much so that I expect the relationship is even closer, and that they are the same bird, altered only by environment. The British grouse is really a sport (and it is a capital name for him) from the true type, which is represented by the skov-rype or willow-grouse, not only in all Northern Europe, but also in the same latitude in America, and I believe of Asia. They are familiar enough in the early spring at home, where they may be seen hanging in the fishmongers' shops in large numbers under the title of "ptarmigan," which they much resemble in their white winter plumage. There are occasionally real ptarmigan among them, but hardly more than one among a hundred. The difference may be detected at a glance by several signs, the easiest being the toe nails, which in the

Skov-ryper (willow-grouse) in winter plumage.

true ptarmigan are black, in the willow-grouse almost white. The bill is also unmistakable, that of the ptarmigan being much more slender and elegant than the strong blunt beak of the other bird. The former has a black line behind the eye, which is absent in the latter, and there are other minor differing characteristics.

But in life the two birds have nothing in common. The grouse lives in the birch and willow belt at low, or comparatively low, altitudes, the ptarmigan in the desolate region just short of eternal snow; and if the two species have ever crossed, it is of as rare occurrence as the hybrids of British grouse.

The skov-rype is a fine sporting bird; all he lacks at present is education. His lamentable ignorance leads him to sit among the scrub while Man is trampling about within a yard or two, instead of flying up and getting shot, as a properly brought up Scotch bird or a *young* Yorkshire grouse does under the same circumstances. (The old one, I need hardly say, does not wait for the trampling.)

But when Man is accompanied by a dog, this behaviour is

injurious to the future prospects of the willow-grouse; bird after bird of a broad may be found and shot at, and, unless the sportsman is something rather exceptional as a bad shot, most of them ought to be bagged. His flight is about the same as that of a grouse, but his white wings make him a more conspicuous mark, and the average distance is not so great. On the other hand, the trees among which he generally lies give him some extra chances of safety.

Without a dog, however, his pursuit is so nearly hopeless that is was more as a matter of duty than with much expectation of sport that we celebrated the opening day. Our attempts to get a local birdhound had failed, and we should have been thankful for even a terrier or a collie. We knew of a few places where ryper were generally seen when any one went that way with a fishing-rod, and hoped that by walking in line we might induce some of them to fly. Some day I shall have a gun built to look just like a rod, to be fired by turning the reel-handle, and if wings continue to behave as they do at present when one is after fins, the sport will be immense.

We started down towards the lake through the stunted birches, walking in line about fifteen yards apart. Even this close order did not prevent us from going right through more than one lot without flushing them, as we found by turning back to pick up a bird, and seeing ryper rise within a yard or two of where someone had passed. Presently Bobby put up a good brood, the old cock crowing for all the world like a grouse, and giving me a nice shot as his white wings flashed across a little open space. We got the old hen also, but the children scattered to the winds of heaven, and only one was induced to fly again.

The wood was full of fieldfares, and I think their noisy chortlings warned the grouse ahead of us, wherever we might move; and though time after time we came on likely spots, where a newly-shed white-tipped feather, or other signs of our quarry, showed how recently he had been there, the number of rises that we got was very small.

Gradually the wood thinned, and still tending northwards, we worked out to a crystal river rippling and splashing down from our best reindeer fjeld, and making a most beautiful waterfall over a black ledge of the solid rock, just before it rushed through a narrow gully into the lake.

The opposing rocks here approached so nearly to each other, that a couple of fir poles had been thrown across, so we were able to continue our ramble dry-shod.

Bobby as usual had the most success in finding ryper, though he was not particularly deadly. Presently his single barrel was heard behind a rocky ridge down by the lake, and next moment the air was full of white wings and becking cries, as a very large brood came whirring down the wind. This was in open ground; and they settled in full view, rather scattered, but all close round the shores of a little tarn that lay in front of Eric. The cover was very scanty: a score of wind-torn birches and a few tufts of dwarf willow, heather, and ragged grass; and it looked as if every bird would be found and made to rise without any difficulty.

Yet when we had spent half-an-hour poking about in the scrub, and trying all the possible places most carefully, only four of them had taken to their wings, though the worst dog ever known could hardly have failed to show us the whole brood. Another two or three were found along the track which the few travellers through this wild region have to use. Like grouse, they love to pick about in any place where horses go; and like them, too, they have I think a tendency to frequent the vicinity of human dwellings, a weakness which up here they cannot indulge in to any great extent.

At last we reached the Narrows, the place where the rocky ridges running out from either side of the lake nearly meet and divide it into two. The wind, whatever its direction, always sweeps straight up or down a hill-girt sheet of water; and on this exposed dam, lying at right angles to the draught, it cuts like a knife, and the effect on vegetation is most remarkable.

The common birches have taken to crawling like their humble

cousin *(Betula nana)*, and though some of them have thickish stems, and would, as far as size goes, have a right to be called trees, they are absolutely flat on the ground, clinging to the rock like the roots of Scotch firs; not that they have been blown over, but simply because they have never been able to lift themselves an inch into the air. And the humbler greenfolk, blueberries and the like, are the neatest, trimmest specimens of their class that can be imagined; for the moment that any enterprising shoot attempts to project a barleycorn beyond its fellows, down comes the wind like a pair of horse-clippers, and shaves it off as smooth as well-kept box edging. Nevertheless there were bits of sheltered nooks even here under the lee of upreared rocks, and in them we found perhaps more ryper than anywhere else; but so close and even was the cover, wherever it could exist at all, that, mark the birds as accurately as we would, never one of them was seen to get up twice.

By the time we had worked out all the Narrows ground we were ready for lunch. There had been a little trouble in providing this all-important meal, as we did not wish to use any of our scanty stock of tinned food, and there did not seem to be enough of anything else.

Someone suggested that the Cookery Book might help. I am not going to advertise the Work we had purchased under this head, but it cost a penny, and was worth—well, I simply cannot name the sum it was worth. We searched its pages carefully, and found nothing to help us, but in a larger edition I have just discovered this, which has been copied word for word:—

"PICNIC—THINGS NOT TO BE FORGOTTEN AT.

"A stick of horseradish, bottle of mint sauce, well corked, bottle of salad-dressing, vinegar, made mustard, pepper, salt, *good* oil" (we thought this extravagant, surely bad oil is good enough for a picnic), "and pounded sugar. If possible, take a little ice. It is scarely necessary to say that plates, tumblers, wine-glasses, knives, forks, and spoons must not be forgotten; as also teacups and saucers, three of four teapots, some lump sugar and milk, if this

last-named article cannot be obtained in the neighbourhood. *Take three corkscrews* (my italics).

"*Beverages:* Three dozen quart bottles of ale packed in hampers; ginger-beer, soda-water, and lemonade, of each two dozen bottles; six bottles of sherry, six bottles of claret, champagne *à discrétion*" (discretion is distinctly good), "and any other light wine that may be preferred, and two bottles of brandy. Water can usually be obtained, so it is useless to take it."

My gracious! and she calls it a PICNIC! I should like to see her "Instructions for the Preparation of an Orgie," or the paragraph headed "Bacchanalia: How to Make." Of all this long discourse the last sentence was the only one that seemed to bear much on our circumstances, and we had to struggle along without the three corkscrews and the mint sauce, and were fairly happy, considering that we had not

"Everything on earth to eat.
And twice as much to drink."

For Picnic purposes in most years it is safe to count on a plentiful supply of dessert, in the shape of the berries which cover the lower parts of the fjeld, but the cold late summer of this season has played havoc with most of them; the bearberries were the only numerous sort and they unluckily are not excellent food. The proper crop of blueberries must have been a complete failure, though there is now a very fair second lot coming on; but the cloudberry—*Rubus chamæmorus* Illustrissimus—the pride and glory of the fjeld, has, alas, disgraced himself. This is the more disappointing, because Nord Vand lies in the heart of excellent "multe-bær" country, and in ordinary years a basket could be filled in a few minutes, and emptied in fewer. I fancy in one or two favoured spots Bobby has discovered a sufficient number to give himself a pain (in the same place and time that the late lamented Dey of Algiers is reported to have suffered, *i.e.* "the middle of the Dey"), but certainly no one has yet found enough to justify him in clucking like a Brahma Cock, for the others to come and help.

Going after ryper without a dog is, looked at from the purely sporting point of view, simply ridiculous; and this description of the sort of day that we get in pursuit of these birds gives no idea of the really fine shooting that any one may fairly expect who will take the trouble to import his own dogs. It appears not to be generally known that it is now possible to do this, though the process, which any Norwegian Consul will explain, is rather complicated, and involves a little expense. Not, however, more than it is worth; and we ought to be grateful for this inducement offered to lovers of Norway to improve the quality of her sport, without in any way spoiling the naturalness which is its greatest charm.

However, we did not grumble at our first interview with the ryper; we had a glorious walk, brought home some excellent bird-food, and, like the Jovial Hunters, though this ryper-shooting

> "doesn't pay,
> We'n powlert' up an' down a bit,
> And had a rattlin' day."

This is a capital country for the young idea to pratise shooting in; not the least advantage being that the young idea cannot consume unlimited cartridges. So we impress upon Bobby that "the only time a gun isn't loaded is just after the accident," and turn him loose on the moor, with perfect confidence that though he may shoot himself, he certainly cannot hit any other human being.

There is no chance, for instance, of his emulating the performance of the man who shot his host, and satisfactorily explained it by admitting, "Oh yes. I saw you right enough, but I thought you were one of the beaters."

«Bear to the left!»

Or that other in North Lancashire,

who knocked the keeper off his feet by mistaking his gaiters for a hare, and *gave him the other barrel on the ground*.

I forgot to mention that soon after we started this morning, in the thickest part of the birchwood we got a little off the line, and someone shouted, "Bear to the left, Bobby," and was astonished to see that youth hurl away his gun and scramble up a tree.

He *said* he had only gone up to look at a fieldfare's nest, but that did not prevent the Poet from adding another laurel wreath to his brow by the following effusion:—

"The blood more stirs
To rouse a lion, than to start a hare."
—*Henry IV.*

"And climbing firs
Is warmish work when chivied by a bear."
—*Robin I.*

The word "firs" is used by poetic licence only; we are above the region in which they flourish. Howbeit there is one fir-tree that I know of on the shores of Nord Vand, but it is only two feet high, and looks as if it were two hundred years old. As a refuge from bears it would be wholly useless, though the creature might use it as a toothpick after he had finished lunching on one.

It is only fair to Bobby to say that I am convinced he is not afraid of bears, at any rate not of the she-variety. If he were he would unquestionably behave differently to his baldheaded elders.

His want of reverence has, however, had one good effect, in rousing John from a despondency into which he was falling, on account of the noticeable increase of respect with which the younger generation, as a rule, are beginning to treat him. This thing of being looked up to by youth is very terrible to John. "What," he exclaimed bitterly one night when we were talking metaphysics, "what *have* I done that I should be respected?"

"Absolutely nothing, as far as I know," I replied, thinking to quiet him down by sympathetic treatment; and why he should throw boots about like that passes my comprehension.

Some people cannot bear agreement; they want to argue. I went into an hotel in Dublin once with a young lieutenant who had landed for half-an-hour, after a week's manoeuvres in a torpedo-boat. We met a chambermaid, and he said, "I want a bath." She just looked at him, and remarked, "Begorra, ye *do*."

When he came out, what with the change of clothes and other things, his own dog barked at him, taking him for a distinguished stranger.

Well, I dodged the boots, and explained to John that the innocents of whom he complains only respect him because they think him wicked. They know he has had large opportunities for being wicked, and they fondly imagine that if they themselves had such glorious chances they would seize them with both hands. Of course they would not really do anything of the sort, but they know no better.

Consequently they respect him desperately, and it would be worse than useless for him to deny the imaginary life of crime on which this conduct is based. They would only revere him the more as a consummate liar. And so we shall go down in sorrow, and ever-increased respect, to that grave which will be about the only thing we have really merited. Heigho! What?

In the meantime, here is Bobby growing up without any veneration for any one of us; though I observe with satisfaction that he has some little for Hans, who really looks like Moses and the Prophets. Otherwise I should have confidence that he would be likely to eclipse even a promising youth I once knew, who made first Oxford, and then England, too hot to hold him, and was finally turned out of Leadville, Colorado, U.S.A., at the age of twenty, because he was running such a wild gambling saloon that he was *demoralising the community*.

Leadville, mind you!

And yet there is a strong tendency in many quarters to belittle the educational powers of our great seats of learning, and to assert that their system is altogether antiquated, and unsuited to modern requirements.

I am not sure, however, that I am really pleased to hear John imploring, "I do wish, Bobby, you would try to set your father a better example." It may be all right, but there seems somehow to be a kind of a vague sort of a backhanded reflection in it, yet not sufficient to justify me in putting juniper into John's sleeping-bag, or any corrective measures of that nature. And even these presumably well-meant efforts are all nullified by the behaviour of the natives whom we have to do with, who all persist in spoiling the "meget smaa Engelskmand" to the utmost of their ability.

We came back to the hut to find that that good fellow G. had walked over and brought us our first instalment of home news, letters and newspapers galore. He found that by making this little detour to Nord Vand, it would only take him about fifty miles out of his way from the place he wanted to reach; and in this country that is a small matter.

We killed the fatted teacake for him, and had a festive supper, aided by the newly brought-in deer meat. Next morning he set off on the second half of his slightly roundabout journey, and the business of hunting was resumed.

CHAPTER XI

How Things Happen

It was my turn to take Hans, or perhaps more accurately to let Hans take me. These Norse stalkers are just as keen as their Scotch brethren, and if one of us had gone each time with the same man, and happened to meet with a little more success than the other pair, it would have been apt to produce discord; but by changing each time, the matter was left in the hands of the great goddess, Luck.

I am no strong believer in the power of this divinity, though occasionally she does appear to manifest herself rather convincingly, but in shooting, at any rate, three-quarters of what is called "luck" may be secured by perpetually going very quietly round corners with your gun at full-cock.

And the surest plan to scare her away is letting your man carry the shooting-iron, or taking out the cartridges before you get home.

The wind was still southerly, but had backed slightly to the east, and was very cold. When I turned out at 5.30 there was ice on the edge of the stream which we call the bath, and the "Last of the Mosquitoes" was dead. R.I.S.

We walked northwards about three miles, and then struck off in an easterly direction, intending to sweep round a big piece of country and return home with the wind in our faces. Then a warming climb to the top of the first range, and we found a capital spying-place in the cleft of a pulpit rock, quite sheltered from the freezing blast.

A wonderfully fine valley was spread out before us. Down below

our feet ran the river which yesterday we crossed by the fir-pole bridge close to the lake; here it was a wide but seemingly shallow stream, its course studded with a multitude of water-worn boulders and slippery ridges of live rock. A couple of miles farther up it ran through a narrower gorge, now cracking and bending in the middle from the thawing of the last week's weather. Higher still it flowed again in a flat open channel for perhaps a mile, and above that was in a wilderness of snow and ice, torn and tumbled rocks, and lifeless tarns in which the ice-floes swam, as they broke off from the huge bræs above them.

Across the river lay a wide expanse of flattish country ("flattish" is relative), three or four miles square, at an average height of 4000 feet, and surrounded on all sides by mountains running from 5500 to 6500 feet. This dale was one of our most hopeful spots; its sheltered (again relative) basin was filled with everything beloved of deer: lakes in every depression, bare rocky eminences in profusion, shale for them to eat when so minded, green stuff when their inclinations pointed that way, and couches of snow disposed in suitable places whereon they might graze—I suppose snow can be grazed; anyhow a reindeer believes it can—and rest.

So we spied and spied, and better spied, and at last Hans heaved a world-weary sigh, and said resignedly, "Meget stor fjeld, og ingen rens," which, together with the sigh, may be interpreted, "Fancy all that huge place and not one blessed deer." But there was no help for it, so we went a little more to the east, and turned uphill against the wind.

Next moment we were flat on the ground, but too late; we had walked into the view of four deer which had been within 300 yards to windward of us all the time we were spying from the pulpit rock. They had seen our heads, no more, but enough to scare them and send them scampering off in a dubious can't-make-it-out kind of way, with frequent halts and perplexed stares towards the place where the unpleasant apparition had shewn itself. Finally they trotted round the shoulder of the hill, and we made after them as speedily as possible.

It looked as if it must be the simplest thing in the world to walk round that shoulder at a higher level, and have them in full view below us five minutes afterwards; and yet when we arrived there they had disappeared as completely as if they had dived into the bowels of the earth, or flown like birds over the mountain top.

The reindeer's ability for vanishing into space is something marvellous. There, to all appearance, was about half the Amt spread out before us like a map, and not a sign of the four big creatures that had so lately been such an important addition to the scenery; and though we waited long and searched on every side, never another glimpse of them did we get.

So at last we comforted ourselves by saying they were not good deer—it was nearly true, but there was one fair one among them—and turned to our eastward journey again.

Soon we were spying the same big basin from a higher and more favourable position; and after a long time I caught sight of a deer going at speed a couple of miles away, and while watching him, another came into the circle of the glass. They were travelling so fast that it was difficult to keep them in view, and I dared not look off for a moment to try to show them to Hans. Up the farther side of the river they went, beyond the big snow bridge, and at last to my joy they stopped and began to feed in a hurried way, pressing on again at a trot between every few mouthfuls.

They were now three miles away, and very difficult to see in the grey surroundings of the place they had chosen, and while trying to explain their whereabouts to Hans, I lost them. Luckily, almost at the same moment, Hans picked them up with the big glass, and said they were now feeding quietly in a favourite hollow that he knew of old.

We put up the glasses and started at a run, partly to get warm after our long wait on the chilly hill-top, but more because you cannot afford to waste time with reindeer; they are restless creatures, and so constantly on the move that swiftness of foot is one of the important factors in making a successful hunter.

«Thirty yards wide, and oh, how cold!»

Down the hill we ran for half a mile, over jagged stones varied by occasional snow-wreaths; both bad going, but the snow rather the worst. After a week's practice the stones are not as difficult to tackle as they look; and one gets the trick of striding or skipping from one sharp corner to another, about as fast as a man would walk on level ground.

And now we were at the river, and I looked longingly at the snow bridge farther up; but without doubt it was too near the line of wind, and Hans never gave it a thought, but dashed straight into the pale bluish-green water, still swollen from the long spell of warmth. Thirty yards wide, and half-way up our thighs for depth, and oh, how cold! I could feel no legs when we were through, and if Hans had not been there, I fear it is questionable whether I should have faced it; but when Sixty-two charged into it at a cheerful run, what could one do but follow?

Providence had been considerate enough to construct a good

deal of a hill on the opposite side, and by the time we had reached the top, still at the best possible pace, we were warm enough, not to say oppressively so. The best garments for this work are a matter of opinion, and the same sort may not be the best for all people, but my notion of comfort is stockings suspended, not turned down or gartered, and a pair of light-grey flannel trousers cut off above the knee—running "shorts," in fact—which arrangement gives the most absolute freedom to the legs. In very cold wet weather I put on a pair of thin gabardine knickerbockers over the others, but this day I had only the flannels, and they were fairly dry by the time we were cautiously spying the deer from a little hill about 600 yards to the west of them, which in the half gale that was now blowing was a perfectly safe place.

They were, as far as we could make out, either two bucks, or a buck and an old hind, and I made up my mind to shoot only at the first, whatever might betide. We could see them now feeding peacefully in a little dish-shaped valley, about half a mile across, of particularly smooth and unbroken surface, though the best smoothness of the fjeld is the smoothness of a magnified gravel path, said gravel being a profusion of grindstones, paving-stones, and milestones raked into shape by the weight of sliding snows and the force of summer floods.

Still it looked far too unbroken for any nearer approach to be made; a shallow dish like this with the deer in the middle of it is about as difficult a place to stalk as can be found, and though we warily gained a few score paces, with our utmost endeavours we could not get within a quarter of a mile.

It was now past noon, and while we lay watching them as they gently moved about and fed, and hoped that something would presently give us a chance, first one and then the other performed that celebrated vanishing trick, and disappeared under our very eyes.

"Lying down," said Hans, and suggested lunch.

It was obviously the right thing to do, and usually one would have done it as a matter of course, but I had reckoned on the day

turning out warm like its predecessors, and had dressed accordingly. Hans had made the same mistake, but seemed able to stand the cold, at any rate better than I could; and now that the effects of our sprint uphill had worn off, I was beginning to freeze harder than ever.

So I tried a little wandering and spying from various positions, and at last, just between two big boulders, a ripple of something white suddenly waved upwards under a furious gust of wind, and I managed to make out one of the deer. It was lying facing away from us with its head close to the ground, and it was the white hair of the hindquarters that had flickered up under the breeze so opportunely.

I could not show it to Hans, but while he was trying for it, he chanced to spot the other, which, curiously enough, I was equally unable to see; though, as it turned out, they were lying within a stone's throw of each other. They had come considerably nearer than where we last saw them feeding, and their new position. and the fact that they were both facing the same way, made it possible to gain another few yards; and we arrived at what I called a good long 300.

Thirty yards in front was a certain "svart sten" (black rock) which looked forlornly possible, and I slowly and painfully serpentined thither, and arrived safely; but this was unquestionably the limit, for the black stone was on the very brink of the dish-shaped valley; just in the place where the salt lies in the side of a dinner-plate.

Hans had a much more exalted opinion of my shooting powers than I have, and was confident that the "svart sten" was within decent range; but it looked a terribly long way to the only visible deer; and in the position he had taken there was no possibility of shooting. So I lay still in that bitter hurricane, and froze solider and solider every minute, and begged and prayed those rens to "get up and walk this way, please."

Punctually to the hour they rose, chatted a minute, and then began to feed again, crossing the wind away from us. By this time

I was numbed and desperate, but the 300 yards' sight was already up, and the first time my chosen deer gave a broadside chance, I took it rather fine, allowed a yard for the wind, and pulled. To my joy, and I must add wild astonishment, the bullet went home; and though the deer never moved, the swaying head and spread fore-legs told plainly enough that there needed no second shot.

The other was off in a hurry, also broadside on, and I forgot all my good resolutions, took a careful aim, and—missed clean; and considering my frozen fingers and the raging hurricane, it was perhaps creditable to send the bullet as nearly straight as it went. It struck a rock just in front; the deer stopped, twisted round, and galloped straight away over the snow bridge and up the steep side of Svartdals Hö across the river; and by this time I had remenbered my virtuous resolve, and was not sorry for the miss.

The other deer was dead, the bullet an inch too high, but would that it always went so nearly right; and Hans was good enough to admit that it was a much longer shoot than he had supposed. The horns were not yet clean, but the hide at any rate was a beauty, with particularly vivid contracts between the dark upper parts and bars on the flanks, and the white of throat and belly.

Then at last we lunched, and began to feel more cheerful; the only drawback being that here came to an end the poor dear little two tablespoon brandy-flask (strictly speaking a flat medicine bottle) always carried for emergencies. Our frozen state seemed such an emergency, and we shared the brandy, but my helpless fingers dropped the empty bottle, and so perished a ten-year-old friend.

We were a long way from home, and it was three o'clock, so we turned sæterwards, following the road taken by the other deer over the snow bridge, and after mounting Svartdals Hö, once more felt the blood circulating. In another hour we were warm and dry, and the wind began to drop. When we were within four miles of home, life had altogether become so much more genial, that

Hans suggested a little detour to a "meget god plads" for a rens. So we turned aside, and were soon spying into a very likely-looking dale, high up on the shoulder of the big mountain.

A great snow-field occupied the head of the valley, and from it ran the mountain torrent that supplies the water for our highest foss. We have two noble waterfalls in our private grounds, so to speak. "Our foss," which is the biggest, has already been mentioned, but above it, to the north, there is another with less volume but a greater fall; and the foaming water thinly spread over a surface of black rock has a peculiar effect of white embroidery, from which we call it the Lace Foss.

The wind would not blow in the face of the setting sun, and had now changed to a gentle breeze from the north-west, so we were very comfortable, and did not hurry our search, but at last Hans the Insatiable began to strap up his glass, saying mournfully, "No more rens to-day."

I worked up a beautiful Norse platitude, to the effect that "one rens is enough for one day," to comfort him, when he suddenly said, "I can see three deer without the glass," and there sure enough they were, half a mile in front, and so entirely in full view that I have never understood how we missed them before. Two were the usual rich grey which harmonises so well with the surroundings, but the third looked at this distance pure white, and was a most conspicuous object as it moved slowly about, feeding on some sparse vegetation just beyond the stream.

"One rens enough for one day" is doubtless an excellent sentiment, but *scilicet:* "If you cannot get any more."

Without any discussion, we started on the necessary tour of circumvention, and by six o'clock were lying close to the big snow-field in which the torrent had its source, about 500 yards to leeward of the deer, which were still peacefully feeding in the same place.

Presently they moved a little lower, and we crept a hundred yards nearer, but that seemed to be the last possibility in the way of approach, and we could only wait for them to help us. Far

from doing this, their next performance was to lie down; and for an hour they alternately stood and lay down for short spells, while I tried to sketch their varied graceful attitudes as long as my fingers had any feeling, and after that shivered on the cold rocks above them. But after half that time we had risked a crawl to what looked a wildly possible ten yards nearer; and from there, emboldened by success, we thought we could see our way to another stone a few yards nearer still.

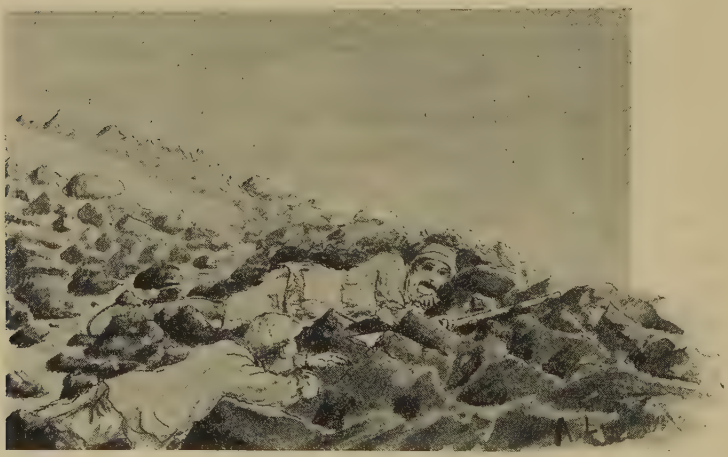
So from stone to stone we wormed our way, literally dragging ourselves forward by hands and arms; knees you cannot use, they lift you from the ground, and the whole of you must be kept absolutely flat the whole time.

Once started on this risky journey, we kept on venturing still farther and farther, for there was very little daylight ahead of us, and unless we could get within shot soon, it would be useless to get there at all. It was cruel work dragging one's battered body over those vicious stones, head downwards—uphill crawling is child's play compared to doing it downwards—and at intervals racked by cramp, from the strained postures in which we had to stiffen, when one of the deer chose to get up and stare our way for a minute or two.

Twice we came to little streams running down to the main watercourse across our path; and though Hans went in front for the first part of the crawl, he never mopped up sufficient of the contents to make any appreciable difference to me. Then we had lengths of the mossy mud or slime that is produced somehow around the sides of every patch of snow, as full of water as a sponge, but even these variations were a welcome relief the awful stones.

I had not previously thought Hans a mirthful person, but in the middle of one of these brooks, which we had selected as a resting-place because of its lowness, he suddenly went into a fit of noiseless laughter. My clothes were not new when we started out in the morning, but they were a pretty good suit to go ferreting in, though not quite up to cover-shooting at Sandringham. Still

they were in first-rate order; but now, the sleeves were in rags, and my wrists and elbows cut and bleeding, and with very little skin left on them. The rifle-stock looked as if a dog had worried it, and though I had managed to keep the barrel almost untouched, it was only by giving my left side more than its share of the struggle, and my coat from the breast downwards had ceased to exist.



A fine country for tailors

Not only the cloth on that side was a mournful ruin, but the side pocket was absolutely destroyed, and the lining and big inner pocket were shapeless tatters; luckily I rescued the contents at an early stage of the proceedings. The knickerbockers were new in the morning, but now no English scarecrow would be seen in such things, the whole front of them was worn—not torn—into a threadbare rag, and my knees and shins were painfully scant of "bark."

Hans himself was in rather better plight, but his clothes were a good deal newer and stronger, not to say smarter, than mine to begin with; the elbows, however, were hopelessly gone, and his

knickerbockers barely respectable, and he had smashed the glass of his watch to smithereens. How he laughed. If ever I get him over to England, he shall go to a Pantomime, and when the clown assassinates a pile of bonnet boxes or sits on the swell's hat, I think Hans will expire.

It is only fair to the reindeer to explain that this wholesale devastation in not a very usual incident of his pursuit. I have in three or four previous stalks had long and painful crawls, but never anything as bad as this.

We lay in that brook and chuckled silenty at each other's calamities for a short space, and then resumed the weary worming, and at last did arrive at the Ultima Thule of Wormdom; a long 300 yards from the still resting deer.

But this was a much more hopeful place than we had for the last stalk. Imagine a gigantic letter A, long the right hand side of which the main watercourse ran. Along the left hand side flowed a smaller brook, joining the big one at the apex, and just beyond the junction were the deer, the wind blowing straight up the main watercourse—*i.e.* from them to where we lay, exactly at the right hand of the cross-bar.

When the deer moved, it was almost certain that they would go up one of these two valleys. If they followed the main stream they would come within twenty yards of us; if the other, we could cross the ridge and meet them at the left-hand end of the cross-bar. Only one thing was against us; the light of the setting sun was straight in our eyes, and the golden haze and glare from the snow made it difficult to point a rifle at all accurately.

It was a quarter to eight when they all jumped to their feet, and for a moment we thought something had alarmed them, but apparently it was only their business-like way of saying, "We really are going this time." They played a minute or two; the white deer, which we had made out to be an old hind, pretending to fight with one of the other beasts—both of which, as far as we could tell, were bucks—and then they began to walk along the main stream towards our lurking-place. It all looked quite perfect,

when suddenly they changed their minds, turned back, and disappeared at a trot round the apex of the A, and up the other little valley.

We ran along the cross-bar of the A towards the left hand end, fully expecting to see them within easy shot as soon as we had crossed the ridge, but the disappointing creatures had stopped again, and were now placidly grazing about 200 yards away.

There was no more time to be lost; the light would soon be gone—this, remember, was the last week in August, and in England I imagine it was dark already—and there was no chance of getting any nearer, so I took the best aim I could at the biggest, and as I thought missed him, though we afterwards found the bullet had gone straight, but too low, just grazing the ends of the ribs.

At the shot they ran a few yards, but were evidently bewildered, and tried first one direction, then another; and at last made off towards a big drift rather in our line, and a second attempt dropped the buck just at the edge of the snow.

The other deer were farther away, but completely dazed by the shots echoing and re-echoing from every side of the rock-bound dale, they stood for a full half-minute, while we of course crouched motionless upon our ridge. Then they made up their minds, and came full speed up the glen, almost straight at us. I fired at the leader at about sixty yards—luckily I had had presence of mind enough to drop the sight—and the bullet went in at the breast and smashed the backbone to bits.

The white hind was now on the snow-wreath just below our ridge. She never halted, but galloped straight past us within five-and-twenty yards, and a beautiful creature she looked, in the golden glare that bathed the grey rocks in that unwonted splendour. I was very much tempted to shoot, for the sake of her skin, which, however, we could now see was not really white, but a very light cream colour. Better thoughts prevailed for once, and I trust she is still wandering unmolested, and adorning the wild fjeld with her graceful presence.

I was the more glad that I had refrained when we found that the last deer was, after all, a hind, though a barren one, with a beautiful coat and in very good condition. The horns also were unusually large, and from her whole appearance, coupled with the queer light, I do not think we could fairly be blamed for our mistake; though it was a repetition of bad luck that will always make this a year of disappointment. The buck was only small, and his horns in velvet, though the skin was good.

In the hide of one of these deer, close to the backbone and a few inches away from the tail, was a fat and wicked grub akin to, or perhaps identical with, the warble of England. I have always heard that the reindeer was subject to this affliction, but hitherto supposed that wild deer were exempt. The wretch had made a large cell for his dwelling, but though no doubt he caused pain at first, the skin seemed to have calloused into a kind of nonsensitive leather all around him; and certainly it had not affected the well-being of the unlucky deer, who was the fattest of the three.

It was nearly nine before we were at home, tired enough after our long day, but very well satisfied on the whole.

CHAPTER XII

Housekeeping

Saturday came, and Michael was anxious to visit his farm and see that the barley-sheaves were being properly impaled on fir-poles in the orthodox Norse manner. So we took the opportunity to send "Kudos" with a load of deer meat for distribution in the valley, and let the dwellers there know how much they could have. These frugal people cannot afford to use much meat, and venison is a most welcome addition to their winter stores, so that however many deer are killed, none need be wasted.

I wandered up on to the mountains with a camera—though for abundant caution Hans brought the rifle also—in the hope of getting a sitting from a rens. It was a dark day, with a look of snow overhead, and not favourable for snap exposures. Nevertheless we found and stalked a solitary hind, and did fire off half-a-dozen shots from the kodak (four undisturbed, and two running), all of which came out better than could have been expected. Unfortunately, a kodak at a hundred yards, which was as near as I could get, gives such a tiny picture that is is impossible to reproduce it in a book, but they have helped to show the true attitude of the reindeer both trotting and galloping.

No other deer seemed to have visited the part we covered in our ramble, but there is hope for us now in the wind, which is working round a little nearer to the North each day.

As we climbed the track up to "our Foss" on the northern bank, we overtook on the south bank the girl from the other sæter

taking out her herd of cows. It is a pretty sight; the girl goes first, generally carrying a bucket with curds or something of that sort in it, and at intervals stops and sings a variety of little jodelling songs, which I grieve to say I am not musician enough to put on to paper. Then she pampers the cows with small portions out of her bucket, and thus leads them off to the place where she wants them to feed that day, maybe two or three miles from the sæter. I think they find their own way home at night; no doubt their milk would urge them to do so without any jodelling, but I have never been about the sæter at that time.

The cows are very pretty, small, generally cream coloured, or cream and black, or brown; very timid; that is to say, nervous with people they do not know, but as tame and gentle as creatures can be. The Chief Cow is always adorned with a splendid brazen collar and bell, and many of the less important ones are intrusted with minor magnificences. They are extremely docile and well behaved, and never eat the washing, or gambol on our bedding when it is put out to air. English cows, as is well known, feed on stockings and lace handkerchiefs in preference to grass, whenever they succeed in breaking into the drying-ground, and they like to play at haymaking with the best drawing-room muslin curtains; but these dear little mild-eyed Norse kine have unlimited opportunities for mischief, and take none of them, but devote the whole of their attention to providing us with sufficient cream, which, as there are only about twenty of them, is a fairly arduous task.

The cow-girls is often even more picturesque than her charges; and this one was a particularly nice damsel, and looked perfectly charming as she climbed the mountain with her light firm step, while her merry call came echoing down from the sides of "Nordmands Hö."

So I naturally took off my hat to her—there was a great, big, wide, deep, cold, rough river between us, and my wife was not there anyway—and she kissed her hand to me in the prettiest opera-bouffe manner. So of course I kissed mine back to her—you remember about the river—and about that time Hans said he

thought we should be late for the reindeer, and we parted, and I have not seen her since.

I could not see what Hans had to do with the matter—probably he was jealous—but he informed me in a severe and parental manner, during lunch, that many years ago there came a wild Russian foreigner into these parts, who spent all his time living at sæters and proposing to the sæter girls. They did not, Hans said, as a rule, marry him, but they liked the glory of being proposed to, and things went along very harmoniously until one day one of them went and accepted him. Since then there has been no more romance on the fjeld, but the boom in the business of sæter-girling has continued without intermission even to this day.

I knew a man something like that once in England; but his difficulty was that he wanted a girl who would love him for himself alone. His extreme conscientiousness always prevented him from telling them—they passed in a kind of perpetual panorama of dissolving views—that he doated on them; for as he explained to me, "I should never forgive myself if I induced a girl to marry me by telling her I loved her devotedly, and then found out after we were married that it did not really amount to quite as much as that." I told him I thought there might possibly be a girl of the sort he wanted somewhere in the world, and he had better trot about and look for her. That was fifteen years ago; and the last I heard of him he was still trotting.

The sæter season varies according to the weather from year to year; but the first week in September sees some of them closed, and I suppose all are deserted before the end of the month. There is a piteous inscription on the wall of our hut, written by I know not whom, as he puts no name, only a date—9 sept.

"The girl is going home; I am alone now"—a wail of despair of which Alexander Selkirk might have been proud. But it is no wonder that the poor man felt frightened at the prospect in front of him; no milk, no tidying—except what he would do himself, and a lone man soon finds that life is too short for much of that—no

jodelling, no coffee-making, and, worst of all, no more of that store of smiling welcome which in a sæter never seems to fail.

Hard-working, cheerful, honest sæter girls: our best respects to you. There may be some of you who do not deserve it, but I can truthfully say I have never met them. Woman is, as I understand from those people who have studied the subject, an angel in disguise, and the only drawback is that the disguise is generally too complete; but disguises are not fashionable on the fjeld.

I have no difficulty in holding long conversations with Hans and Michael, though my knowledge of Norse is very smattery, and grammar quite beyond even an attempt, to which drawbacks may be added—in John's opinion—an entirely wrong pronunciation. As, however, that deluded person is under the impression that "Syltetöi," the Norse word for Jam, sounds like "tay," it is obvious that his notions are unworthy of attention. The fact seems to be that these provincials talk something like mediæval and Elizabethan English, with a large proportion of Lowland Scotch and Lancashire dialect thrown in. Some day, if time allows, I shall jot down all the parallel words that are in frequent use, and they will make a very long list. The spelling of course goes for very little; I do not think the Norseman is more "spell-bound" than the Briton, and he is quite as far removed from what Mrs. Malaprop calls spelling "fanatically." But the sound is often identical, and the key to unfamiliar words seems generally to be found by trying to remember what was the English meaning of that sound in Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, or the Bible, and that is probably what it means in Norse now. Very likely if Cædmon were included it would explain everything, but it might perhaps be rather simpler to learn Scandinavian from the start. When some English words have been restored to their ancient meaning, and some others now obsolete have been revived, one has obtained a very fair vocabulary for conversing with Norwegian country-folk, though not so much for the more modernised "classes."

This theory was propounded to the Sæter Debating Society

one day, before it was properly worked up, and they finally agreed that there was perhaps something in it—it is a great triumph to get as much as this out of a Debating Society—but they thought it was carrying the thing too far to announce, for instance, to Hans, "De og Michael maa tossuppen for dette."

Hans and Michael, however, had not the slightest difficulty in understanding what it meant.

Miss Meadows, on the other hand, is a stumblingblock; she would upset any philological proposition in the wide world. She does not understand my early English, or Eric's French (of the scole of Stratford-atte-bowe), or John's Plat Deutsch, or Bobby's school slang; and as far as we can make out, she cannot talk Norwegian. She calls "melk" "murruk," and flöde (cream) "fracte"; and in fact is altogether so dreadfully provincial, that we have ceased to hold converse with her for fear of spoiling our accent, and also because it would be just as effective to talk to the coffee-mill.

Coming back to the sæter from the Kodak tour, we found that the whole strength of the company had been engaged all day on a most disastrous bake; everything had gone wrong all the time; fire would not burn wood, wood would not heat oven, oven would not bake bread, and so on, until the result was a heap of distorted turnip—like monstrosities, smeared with black, which the Band were endeavouring to convert into loaves by toasting them in the frying-pans.

"There has been more trouble," John averred, "about one thing and another than there has with anything else; drudge is simply no word for what we've been doing."

In my sympathetic way I replied, "It certainly was not," and it appeared that again my remarks were fated to be misunderstood. Luckily Bobby, who has a genius for fatuities, intervened with a proverb of his own invention. "Half a loaf," he remarked sententiously, "is better than dry bread." Which, as we had not a crumb of any kind in the place, was eminently appropriate and satisfactory.

This was the only time the staff of life really failed us. Probably the change of weather had somehow affected our kitchen range; but as, providentially, there are no plumbers or bricksetters within two hundred miles to make matters worse, it did not affect our happiness; and we proceeded, for this night only, to the construction of some crumpets, the well-known "Rattlesnake" brand, not absolutely certain to be fatal, but uncommonly likely to be so unless prompt measures are taken.

Among our preserved foods were some tablets of compressed soup, tomato, carrot, and pea. They were all good, and we found them most useful on several occasions; the last-named especially was so much appreciated that the Poet composed what he was pleased to call a trilingual epigram on it:—

"Spes spise's pea soup." "The hope of the dinner is the pea soup."

Further explanations will be given to any distracted reader on receipt of stamped envelope (with another stamp inside).

There was a good deal of housekeeping to be done about this time: the stores had diminished so much that we could now see clearly the relation between the balance left and the time that remained for consuming it, so henceforth John had his wish, and we were put on rations, though the allowance of most things was pretty lavish, and of some quite extravagant.

Eric undertook one day to make a rice-mould, *i.e.* boil some milk and rice together until it would set solid. I told him casually that the rice swelled a good deal, but did not give definite instructions; so he about half filled a big can, and when we came back from an afternoon's fishing, it was overflowing out of the door of the sæter, and John opined that the canoe was about the only thing we possessed big enough to hold it all.

But we worked steadily through it in about three days. It reminded one of the nervous parson who mixed up his grace, and instead of saying, "Who hast spread our board with plenty, make us mindful of the wants of others, and give us thankful hearts," exclaimed, "Oh be mindful to spread our board with plenty, and

give others thankful hearts." Our board—in fact every board in the house at this time—was certainly spread with plenty, and we had no need to echo the sentiments of the child who, when told to say grace after dinner, clasped her hands, shut her eyes tight, and beseeched "For God's sake, some more pudding."

The weather had been on the whole remarkably kind to us, and the only calamity so far had been a sudden summoning of the Royal Humane Society one sunny afternoon, when the Foss torrent, under the influence of a specially warm breeze. came down in high flood, and was threatening to carry away our larder. The meat which we had brought down from the hill for our consumption was covered with muslin, and packed in a stone den that we made for it on the bank of our coldest river; and this situation, with the big cold stones piled over it, kept it at a very low temperature. But we had not reckoned on a possible two or three feet rise in the torrent at this time of year, and were only just in time to get it out and repacked at a higher level, before the depth of water covering it would have made the rescue rather difficult.

On Sunday morning, 28th August, while Michael was away, this Eden-like state of happiness was rudely interrupted by a violent storm of wind and rain, the latter some of the heaviest I ever saw. Our roof was constructed in the usual Norse manner: rough boards on the rafters, layers of birch bark over them, and sods of turf above the bark. These ought to remain green and grow a compact crop of grass, which is mown for hay with the other fields when the right time comes. When in good order it will turn a great deal of rain, but our turfs had either been cut too thin, or else been unlucky in getting parched as soon as put on, and the grass was nearly all dead. Probably also the birch bark up here, where the trees are so torn and stunted, is not of A1 copper-bottomed quality, and the allowance of it may have been stinted.

Anyhow, from some or all of these causes, the roof leaked as badly as a pram, and we were roused from our Sunday "Long-lie" at about seven in the morning, by water simply pouring into the hut like a shower-bath.

All the beautiful orderliness of our arrangements vanished in a trice, and for half-an-hour we were dancing about barefoot in dirty puddles, in extremely week-day tempers, and piling all the perishable belongings on to the beds, under the mattresses, while the more weather-proof goods were crammed underneath on the floor; the beds themselves we protected by macintosh groundsheets, of which we fortunately had two, and coats.

The malignancy with which this inflow exerted itself to do as much mischief as possible, was quite extraordinary. For instance, the gun cartridges had all been packed away most snugly in a corner near the roof, and at this place a splintered timber acted as a spout for a large expanse of gathering ground, and poured such a steady stream into them that they were up to their necks when found. Luckily they were Normal powder and waterproof cases, and their shooting did not seem to be affected.

The wind howled and roared outside, and the rain dashed upon our unfortunate roof with exactly the same sound that a bucket of water makes when thrown on to the ground; but at last I opened the door with the intention of doing something like washing. The sight was remarkable: the water was lashing along the ground in one white sheet, and for some inches above it there was a confused misty blur of spray dust, for the soil was naturally so dry that the violent rain could not damp it all at once, and was simply knocking it up.

«He came in thoroughly washed»

I shut the door, and mentioned that I should wash inside this

morning. Eric looked out, and remarked that he should postpone washing to a more fitting season, which appears to be the modern Oxford synonym for "to-morrow." Bobby did not say anything about washing, neither did he do anything about it. John put on a macintosh, without any other garments, and went out; it was believed that he removed the macintosh for ten seconds, and came in thoroughly washed, and that was all the toilet work that was done.

After that we got a rather miserable breakfast; even the sæter roof, which had a good crop of grass on it, leaked badly enough to interfere with the cooking. And then the good old fine weather asserted itself once more, the wind dropped suddenly, and by twelve o'clock everything outside was comparatively dry again, and all our sodden garments, bedding, and other valuables, were airing themselves in briliant sunshine on the wood stack; while the soaked ground was covered with a dense layer white vapour.

We congratulated ourselves somewhat on the fact that we were not living in a tent; and possibly with good reason; such a savage storm would not have been unlikely to sweep a tent bodily away, and the "best Government duck" would hardly have stood the phenomenal rain. But granted that a tent stands up, it is a lime-kiln for dryness compared to a leaky hut. Its fault is not so much dampness as cold, if wet weather continues for any length of time, while a wooden hut under the same conditions would grow more weather-proof all the time.

We seized the opportunity of this uninviting day to smoke our reindeer tongues, a process that was carried out by hanging them down the chimney from a stick across the top, while a huge fire of green juniper twigs was kept going below. It smoked them most effectually, but the green wood fire also completely filled the whole building with its rather suffocating fumes, and Miss Meadows choked convulsively in various picturesque attitudes for a time, and finally retreated to the cowshed.

I have never seen anything like it since the curate of our parish lectured on the Jewish Tabernacle. He had a large-sized model of this building, all made to scale and very complete, and he finished

up the evening by lighting a lot of incense on the high altar, which floated up through the open top of the Tabernacle in a dense cloud. Unfortunately just above hung the cages of his hostess's two parrots, and never till then did I fully understand what being "incensed" meant. One was a fine handsome grey bird, and was always understood to have been brought up in a Cathedral close, and to be filled with the most virtuous sentiments. The other, a green African parrot, had never been known to talk at all, but as the white cloud ascended and wrapped those cages round, he began, and I gathered directly, from the first remark he let fall, that he had voyaged across the ocean in the company of some vulgar sailor men. And what with his loudly-expressed opinions as to a suitable destiny for all the company, but especially for the curate, and the grey parrot intoning alternately "We beseech thee to hear us" and "Aa-men," the meeting, as the newspapers say, "broke up in confusion;" the green parrot being partially quelled while people found their hats by the purple cloth from the top of the tabernacle.

Never mind; like the parrots, after the smoking we found our tongues, and they were subsequently carried to our ancestral homes in England, and eaten with much appreciation.

In the afternoon we had quite a crowd of visitors, four or five girls and three young men, who had walked over from the nearest sæters, about seven miles to the south and the same distance north from ours. They were all dressed most sprucely, and made our tattered garments look more disreputable than ever, especially as Hans had put on some gorgeous raiment, and was doing the honours of our sæter in lordly fashion.

For the matter of that we are all lords in Norway. "Mister" (dreadful word) does not exist, at any rate not on the fjeld; but the plain surname is used both in conversation and writing.

The sæter is always smartened up on Saturday afternoon in readiness for the day of rest; everything washed and double washed; a spray of tall white dried flowers, and branches of pretty leaves, produced from some secret hoard, and put in jars against the wall, and the floor, after being desperately brushed

with a birch broom, is strewn with fragant green juniper twigs, while a fresh door-mat of larger branches is placed outside the entrance.

Then "Miss Meadows and de gals" don new caps, and sit down in all their glory for an "At Home." But till to-day we have not had a large gathering; and we have a shrewd suspicion that this festive reunion has been achieved by the magic formula on the invitation cards, "To meet the three mad Englishmen and Bobby," or words to that effect.

How they chattered! There was one girl whose sæter we imagined must be a solitary one, so that she had not talked for about three weeks. Anyhow that was the amount of conversation that she squeezed into about three hours this afternoon; and remember there were several others doing some fairly creditable performances at the same time.

I noticed one man with a very peculiar new dialect, quite different from that in use either by Miss Meadows or our retainers; the latter of whom we believe to speak pretty good Norse. This fellow was telling a long hunting story, and it was really only by the questions which Hans put in from time to time that I could make out anything of it at all, almost every word that he used being slightly or entirely different from what we consider correct.

I hope we behaved properly; though I fear, judged by their standard, we should be thought wanting in ceremonial politeness. But we did our best, and about the middle of the afternoon the whole crowd adjourned to the other sæter, the abode of Kissi-Kissi, and we saw them no more, though I heard the ringing voice of the Talking Girl going on for long afterwards.

A sæter candlestick

CHAPTER XIII

Trials

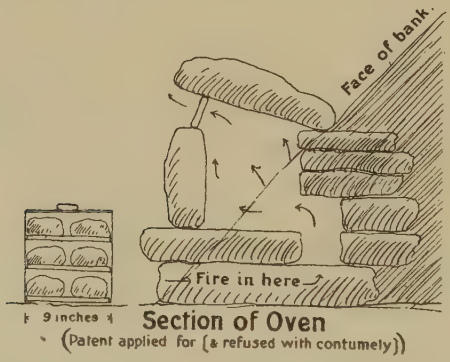
There is no finality about human affairs. It is not right to keep discoveries of great truths like this to one's self. Let the world have them. No, absolute perfection is scarely to be hoped for; the inventor who makes anything less ridiculously unpractical than it was before may go to sleep with an untroubled mind.

And he will be uncommonly lucky if he wakes up without finding that the early post has brought him a writ for infringing some other reformer's patent, and commences that career of legal excitement where the penultimate stage is the House of Lords, and the final the House of Work.

"Invention," as the proverb truly says, "is the Mother of Necessity." Solomon, I fancy—or perhaps a little thing of my own. It *looks* like Solomon, but I am not quite sure.

But on the subject of finality. There was once a young man whose godfather promised him the best gun that could be got; he was to choose it himself, and send in the bill. Now a foolish impulsive youth would have dashed into Bond Street or Purdey's without a hat, and had that godfather swearing mad before nightfall, but this was a cautious person, and he determined to wait for the Evolution of the Perfect Gun. Meanwhile for about five-and-twenty years he shot with borrowed pin-fires and muzzle-loaders, and so forth, and demonstrated conclusively to every proud purchaser of a new weapon what a very defective tin-pot contrivance it was. But one day he realised that he was growing older, and about the beginning of August last year he hardened

his heart and ordered the very latest device in single-triggered three-barrelled choke-bored hammerless repeating ejectors. The godfather was dead, but he sent the bill to the executors. And just before we left England this year, there was a long advertisement of a v.l.d.i.s.t.3b.c.b.h.r.e in the columns of *Exhange and Mart,* with his name behind it. What offers?



These reflections have been aroused by the truculent behaviour of our oven. We have now rebuilt it from entirely new and perfected designs about five times; and each creation has been, if possible, more exasperating in its ways than the last. The weak spot all along has been the stone which forms the door. This is very troublesome to fit, as it has to be laboriously chipped into shape by blows from a clumsy mattock which we unearthed from the cellar. And as soon as one has been successfully finished, the fire is certain to crack it, and it falls ingloriously about and burns people's boots, and they kick it viciously aside, and gets up again without being told, and is heard furiously raging about the hut and shouting for Homocea. All of which is disconcerting, and apt to divert the mind from the serious business of baking.

At last we came to the conclusion, as Eric very clearly put it, that it was "no good perpetually pruning the branches, it must be cut off at the fountain-head," so it was reorganised with a top lid

instead of a front door. The lid cracked with the heat just as badly as the door, but that did not matter, for so long as it remained big enough, there was no necessity to cut it to fit. And a few good sods which we kept ready, filled up all chinks, and also acted as capital nonconductors of heat. The tin interior oven, which was no dropped in from the top, only required a wire handle putting into it, and, after this latest improvement, baking was conducted with considerable ease and comfort, and to the satisfaction of even the baker.

What a lot of difference there is, by the way, between comfort and satisfaction! The latter can be obtained by knowing that you are right, and if you insist upon this fact too strongly, by getting a bullet through your lungs. But if you want comfort, the best method is to persuade the rest of mankind that *they* are right—it is not a laborious work—and let the bullets go through them.

In spite of the Homocea, things have pretty nearly settled down into that ancient orderliness that was so rudely interrupted by the Deluge, and though, as Eric says, there may be a certain amount of what the superficial observer would call untidiness about the hut, it is methodical withal. We can in the darkest night without difficulty put our hands—or feet—on any article we want, and quite a number that we do not, the only thing of whose whereabouts we are uncertain is the box in which Eric's minnows ought to live: *that* can be found nowhere, but of what consequence is it? the minnows themselves are the important matter: and those can be found anywhere and everywhere, in everybody's caps and boots, and stuck to the soap, and in other unlikely places.

«Have any of you seen any minnows?»

John had been steadily incredulous when I assured him that the Last of the Mosquitoes was dead;

but even he had begun with the colder weather to believe that the good news really true. The night after the flood he woke up yelling that one had come to life again, but it turned out to be only of these ubiquitous minnows, which had gone out for an evening's fishing on its own account in his sleeping-bag.

Michael returned on Sunday night, and brought us another large instalment of English mail. It is necessary for highly educated people like ourselves to have literature for use in bad weather; and foreseeing this, I had arranged with the others that they must *not* bring "Pickwick," that being my own contribution to the library. John and Eric had both been more lavish, and produced about four books apiece, including "Somebody's Scientific Dialogues," a charming work which told us how to rear chickens, and what soap was made of, and the way to construct electric tramways, and the number of gas-meters there were in Birmingham. I do not know how we should have managed to exist without it; useful information of this kind is invaluable in a camp.

The one book none of us had brought was the "Problem Novel," and we did not regret it. It is a form of enterprise that does not appeal to us at all. In the good old-fashioned style of fairy tale that properly-constituted people love, all sorts of impossible things happen; but when they happen, the men and women in the story behave like human beings. But in this Problematical Fiction the impossible things happen, and the men and women behave like howling lunatics. In the old tales, when they met an unpleasant kind of dragon, the young woman pulled her petticoats round her ankles, and jumped on a chair screamed, while the young man went into deadly combat with it with more or less success.

But now the young woman tackles the dragon with medical quotations and an umbrella, and the young man weeps, and confesses that he put it there himself. All of which is unromantic and dissatisfying, and worries me very much.

So, as far as solid reading went, all was well, but I had forgotten to give any directions about newspapers; and the result

was we had three copies of the Weekly edition of the *Times,* which was chosen by all of us for instruction and entertainment, and three *Punches,* for serious reflection in quiet moments. There were also one or two *Illustrated London News*—you will notice we are a rather old-fashioned crew—and a copy of the New York *Nation ;* a most encouraging product, which has dared to find out that mistakes have been made on both sides of the Atlantic, and says so.

With these, and numerous letters, we were well provided against a spell of bad weather, if it should chance to come. The day finished colder certainly, but with no appearance of meditating anything very dire, after its one brief outburst.

Only two out of all our accumulated fortnight's letters were at all disquieting, and with them we dealt summarily. John had one from the Vice-Chairman of a Limited Company, and others couched in identical terms from the Secretary, the Managing Director, and the Auditor, explaining that the other three were ruining the concern by their hopeless imbecility, and entreating him to return at once to straighten things out. But we told him these were pretty big mountains, and we thought he was quite safe; and at any rate, if matters got more urgent, we could go a couple of ranges farther east at any time. So, as the ballad says, "he put that arrow by."

Then I had an anxious letter to say SHE was cutting a tooth, and only six months old. "Is not this too early?" I had unaccountably omitted to bring Dr. Bull's invaluable work up here, but the Incorporated Company decided that it *was* too early: and John advised me to send a telegram to say, "Yes; much; stop it at once." As, however, we are a long two days from the nearest wire, a simpler and equally effective method seemed to be to "appear to take no notice." We thought we were lucky to have so little worry, but good wives do not forward County Court summonses and subscription lists.

On Monday the wind seemed to have settled into the North, and I went rather hopefully out with Michael on to "Nordmands

Hö," intending to cross over the top, and come back by our own valley.

Unluckily some sort of wet, rain or vapour, had coated the rocks up on the tops before the wind changed, and they were now covered with a film of ice, upon which it was most difficult to get secure foothold. We persevered, however, up to the actual peak, but a short time before we reached it a thin mist began to form—slowly at first, but soon thicker and thicker—and as it was freezing all the time, walking became more and more dangerous. We knew, however, that a few hundred yards would take us safely down a long snow slope towards the valley, when we should again be below the cloud, and so we pushed on.

But the moment we had crossed the top, the breeze, which was a perfectly steady one, became (as it always does under the lee of a hill) so shifty and uncertain, that we could not steer by it. Still we could see a few yards in front of us, so we tried to walk straight down the snow slope, which might be thought an easy thing to do. Within a minute we were on bare ice, steep, and without any visible end to it. Obviously that would not do; we harked back and tried another direction, and found ourselves on the very brink of the huge gulf into which Nordmands Hö breaks off on its North-eastern side—a wild precipice even in daylight, but in this misty gloom, with wisps of cloud whirling up from the abyss round the black ice-encrusted rocky summit, it was as awful a place as I care to see.

Michael was feeling in all his pockets, and now said he had left his compass at home, and asked for mine. It is a thing one should never be without on the fjeld, and my constant rule—no doubt Michael's also—is to take it. But, owing to the flood, I had changed my coat, and somehow missed changing the compass. So there we were: perfectly lost as far as direction went, though we knew our situation to within a hundred yards. We tried once more, and again came to bare ice; and Michael said we must sit down, and did so.

But I saw no chance of the mist clearing, and sitting on an

ice slope 6000 feet above the sea, for a matter of twenty-four hours or more, is a thing I hate, and will not do for all the reindeer in Norddal. So I hastily gave up the valley, and decided to go back on our own tracks; and not any too soon, for the mist had now been reinforced by fine driving snow, and before we reached the top again, it was almost impossible to see the prints.

Anything more curious than the deviousness of those tracks cannot be imagined, and yet we had believed we were walking fairly straight downhill. They did not seem to keep to one direction for three steps together, and though we had never crossed our own path, I am sure we had several times been near it. But at last we gained the top, and once more had the wind blowing evenly and regularly from one quarter. The tracks were now quite obliterated, but it was an easy matter to steer downhill with the wind on one cheek, and we were soon below the freezing mist and in bright sunshine.

I came on a place where a fox had just been dining off a ptarmigan, but "Reynolds" himself was not visible. I do not think he is a common inhabitant of these parts, though we have seen a few tracks and sign at odd times.

We spent the afternoon in clambering up to our nearest ptarmigan ridge, where a brood of eleven was generally seen when any one went that way to stalk. Eric was just pointing to the exact spot where he had last seen them, about fifteen yards away, when in that identical place the whole lot of them—totally invisible till then, though four pairs of eyes were staring at them—whirred up with such terrifying abruptness, that we only "purwailed on" two of them "to stop." The rest flew fifty yards, and at each future rise we annexed another brace or two until eight of them were safely bagged, and a brace had been lost among the rocks down a precipitous gully; even Bobby joining in the not very difficult slaughter.

Then the sole survivor flew away into the Ewigkeit, while John stood on a pinnacle and quoted Keats at it:—

"Thou wast not doomed to death, Immortal Bird."

But he was quite wrong, for I went up on to the mountain by that track the next day, and finding the "immortal bird" in its usual haunt, picked up a stone, and brought its immortality to a sudden end. I am a poor shot with a stone, or could have killed many at different times; a good cricketer would have no difficulty in keeping a camp stocked with them if the weather were fine. On stormy days, with wind and snow or rain, they put themselves somewhere out of the way, and you will not see one where generally there are plenty. They do not, however, as a rule frequent very sunny spots, but prefer the cool and shady sides of the hill.

The last day of the month went out with a glorious glowing sunset, and a sharp frost immediately following it, that drove us in to the side of the sæter fire. We were not surprised, therefore, when the 1st of September opened beautifully fine and clear, but with all the mountains in sight covered half-way down with a thick coating of new snow.

Eric was taking an off-day, and the men were so hopeful of sport, now that our long-looked-for North wind had established himself, that they both begged to go with me, and accordingly we three started. It was the most perfect morning that miserable man ever gets in this vale of woe, and one to make even the most pessimistic feel that it is a fine world, and a fine thing to be alive in it.

But this pleasant frame of mind was rudely jarred by a far-off shot, which came faintly sounding through the still air, from the direction of the very dale for which we were making. Another and another followed, and then a whole scattering volley, nine or ten in all; and it was evident that the enemy, in the shape of the native hunter, had forestalled us.

We waited a few minutes, and then changed our route, and set off for another likely dale farther to the east. Then, about half-an-hour after the shots, a reindeer hind came slowly up the ridge towards which we were making, stopping and looking back from time to time. In a minute or two more, a big calf followed her,

limping painfully with a shattered hind-leg, and the men thought a body wound as well. It was a pitiful sight, and I determined to go and try to put the poor thing out of pain, but they soon disappeared behind the ridge, and when we looked for them, they were nowhere to be seen; apparently they had worked downhill into the parts where vegetation existed, and there the trail, which might perhaps have been followed on rocks, became invisible. So many of the fjeld plants at this time of year turn to brilliant scarlet and crimson, that drops of blood would be hopelessly lost.

Hans and Michael spying

So we had to turn again, and, with the pleasure of the day considerably marred, set to work to find a deer all to ourselves. With three glasses we considered we ought to make a very clean sweep of the ground, but for a long time, from several positions, nothing could be seen, though we had reached a favourite feeding-place. The sun was shining brilliantly, and the new snow that lay three inches deep over all the higher levels made it easy to assure ourselves that nothing was in view above us, but down below

among the stones and herbage, the glare and vivid contrasts between the black rocks and scattered snow-wreaths added to the usual difficulties.

I had scanned all the dale except a corner of very rough rocky terraces at the foot of a huge steep snow-brae, which stretched up the side of Stor Hö. There something moved, a little cloud of white dust, and in another moment two beautiful bucks were plainly seen, not three-quarters of a mile away, pawing at the loose powdery snow that sprinkled the highest terrace.

Now one of them tried the brae, while his companion stood at the bottom. Up a few yards he went, his shadow inky black on the glittering white expanse, and then there was a scuffle, and a spurting of snow in all directions, as the deer slipped on the icy surface left from yesterday below the new layer of the night; and down he sprawled to the bottom again. while the other deer I am sure smiled loudly.

They evidently wanted to get out of the valley, and now tried to the westward, among the rocky terraces which led upwards by a series of precipitous steps. We hurried down to meet them, and presently were within 500 yards, while the deer were still wandering backwards and forwards, in an undecided kind of way. Now they were out of sight, and as I crept round the corner of the next crag I had the rifle ready, and more than half expected to use it.

But the bucks had in the meantime found a way out, and presently we spied them again far above the highest terrace, on a great snow-field which led upwards in one unbroken sheet, save for a ridge of black forbidding rock, which wound in an irregular chain across its whole length, like the vertebræ of some huge fossilised monster of long ago. Now they were at this natural wall, and again they appeared to be in difficulties, and tried more than one place without being able to cross.

Presently they seemed to give it up, trotted straight down the snow slope again almost to within shot of us *(see Frontispiece)*, and then turned southwards up the glen, circumvented the black

wall at its lower end, and soon were out of sight a mile away, high up on the desert of endless snow.

It never occured to us that there could be any serious difficulty in passing the wall of rock, so we made straight for the place which the deer had first tried, and soon found what had stopped them. The rain and mist of the day before had frozen all over the black crags in sheets and festoons of glittering icicles, and though we did, by pushing and hauling at each other, eventually manage to creep across, our opinion of the deer's intelligence had considerably gone up before we were safely over.

The snow on the other side was very slippery and dangerous, and more than once we had falls and narrow escapes from beginning a glissade which would have ended only at the bottom of the brae; and though the slide down might have been exhilarating enough, I fancy the stopping in those black precipices far below would have ended the career of the reindeer hunter pretty effectually. The men at any rate, who knew more about it than I, were very nervous, and we took no step without trying the foothold, and making a place with the heel through the lower crust. Consequently our progress was very slow, and when at last we reached the top it was a long time before we made out the deer, about two miles away, and moving in the direction of our home valley.

The sky was now overcast, and looking to windward, which for a long time we had been too busy to do, we saw there was going to be more snow, and in a few minutes the storm was upon us. It seemed almost impossible to believe that a couple of hours ago we were rejoicing in the most beautiful weather and perfect scenery that any one could wish to see, and now we were almost smothered in a chilly whirl of whiteness, and deer, mountains, sky, and the rest of the world all blotted out. Worse than this, the spoor (which was so deep in the night's new snow that it would take a long time before the storm covered it up) was now leading straight down the wind, and we therefore dared not follow it.

Our only hope was to make a great detour over the highest peak of Stor Hö, and trust to picking it up again at the pass leading into

our valley, three or four miles away; and of course there was no certainty that the deer were making for there at all. Hans seemed very confident, however, and we started at our best pace. It was a nightmare of a journey, stumbling over invisible rocks, for the driven snow speedily filled up every low place, and made the rough wilderness of tumbled stones look like a smooth expanse; slipping at every step, all of us pure white from head to foot, and half choked from the constantly rising wind, and the finely-powdered snow-dust that it drove along.

Suddenly a fourth white figure, another man I thought, loomed out of the greyness close to us, but it turned out to be the cairn which for survey purposes has been put on every mountain top, and we knew that at last we were on the summit, exactly 6000 feet above the sea. That mountain, by the way, is now three inches higher, for I put a stone of that size on to it while we rested a few minutes, and then we commenced the downward struggle to the pass.

Do you remember the 1st of September in England? I am told that men and dogs—I am not sure whether they did not add partridges—were knocked up at an early hour by the blazing heat. I did not know it at the time, but was wondering what it might be like at home, as we panted down to the pass through snow which on this side lay far above our knees. There, in the place where we had hoped to find them, were the tracks of our deer, heading straight down into the valley, and after them we went as fast as we could, which might possibly be three miles an hour, though we were supposed to be running.

The longer I ramble about the everlasting hills of Norway, the more I wonder at the tremendous endurance and indomitable courage of the old Norse heroes whose exploits have come down to us. The sensational incidents, dragons, giants, and so forth, may have very little foundation, and in any case are doubtless exaggerated, but it is the mere matter-of-fact statements that were not in the least meant to be impressive, and therefore not worked up to sensation pitch, that fill me with amazement.

Thus the great sea-fights, and the battles at wellknown places which could be reached by road, are all embroidered with a gorgeous wealth of marvels, but the stories, for instance, how Olaf the Thick fled from the west across the mountains into Sweden, or how Sverre led his Birch-leg army over the Hardanger Fjeld, are not impressed upon us as anything particularly remarkable. I have never been on the high fjeld in winter; and it is conceivable that the travelling then may be better than in summer; but no possible change can make life in these lofty solitudes otherwise than desperately hard work. Even starting out from a warm comfortable dwelling like our sæter, with plenty of food and clothing, and returning to the same at evening, is quite arduous enough for any ordinary Englishman.

And so by the time we were down from the windy tops, and once more in the shelter of our own valley, I had had almost as much deerstalking as was good for one day, and am not sure that Hans and Michael were as keen as in the early morning. Nevertheless we kept a bright look-out, and presently among the steep rocks which wall in the south-western side, Michael espied two deer, which we thought to be our long-followed bucks, and went for them with as much alacrity as we could summon up.

I cannot say that I was filled with unappeasable grief when a nearer view told us that these were not our grown-ups, but only two big children, early calves of the year, presumably orphans, whose mother had been killed by some of the "Slump" jægers. Unquestionably they were alone, for we saw them again two days afterwards not far from the same place, and had a capital opportunity of making certain that no other deer were about there. The men, however, believed that calves of this age are well able to look after themselves, and would get through the winter as comfortably as their elders; and one hopes they were right.

We came cautiously down the valley, for it was full of fresh spoor, and though at every ridge and hollow we expected to meet either our vanished bucks or some of their relations, we found nothing. But there is little doubt that the deer were near us, and

«Vanished like pale phantoms in the whirling clouds»

saw us, though we missed them, for at the mouth of the valley we turned round for a last look at the ground we had passed, and there, halfway up the southern side, threading their way in single file along the brink of a sheer black cliff, was a herd of eighteen, heading for the highest peak of Nordmands Hö. They were too far away for us to make out exactly what they were, but we could at any rate be sure that half-a-dozen looked big, and comfort ourselves with the thought that the wintry weather had brought the much-longed-for Stor Bock on to our fjeld.

The snowstorm was still raging on the heights as wildly as ever, and up into the grey haze they climbed, and vanished like pale phantoms in the whirling clouds that encircled all the hill; while we turned once more homewards, and in another hour were down at the sæter, to find that the sun had been shining brilliantly all day, and that the Last of the Mosquitoes was not utterly and entirely fatally dead.

It was a grief and disappointment to be told that no one had celebrated the glorious First by going out to look for partridges. Their excuse was that the turnips were too wet. But they might have tried the onions, which were dry enough, being kept on a shelf near the kitchen fire. Bobby, it is true, had been after ryper, an amusement in which he indulges almost every day; there is an old cock just across the bath stream which gave him a whole afternoon's shooting. I think he came back for more cartridges, and I forget what the score on each side was at the end of the day, but I know the old bird was Not In.

Strange how careless the younger generation is getting about observing these ancient ceremonies. "When I was Bobby's age"—John and I generally begin a sentence with these words about forty times every day—I would sooner have missed washing than going after partridges on the 1st of September; and even when much older than that.

I was on the board of a Company once that held its meetings on the first and third Thursday in every month, and the year that the First clashed with this rule, we gravely passed a resolution, "That the first Thursday meeting in September be held on the last Saturday in August." So important to us was the due observance of the festival.

This was not far behind the record of the Captain (can you guess him?) of one of H.M. ships, who, finding that the sucking-pigs were not standing the trials of the Bay of Biscay very well, solemnly ordained that "Christmas Day will be kept on Wednesday next, the 4th of December."

But as for Bobby, give him his old cock ryper, and little he cares for all the partridges—not a very large number—in the whole of Norway.

CHAPTER XIV

Northern Lights—and Shadows

I woke up in the early morning of Sept. 2nd dreaming that the Dan-dog was licking my face; undoubtedly there was something cold on it; and presently I realised that a snowstorm of the liveliest kind was careering about outside, with offshoots into the hut through the open window.

Since Bobby was roped into his bed, he has had to cut down his noctural gymnastics to reasonable dimensions; all he does now is to wriggle about half-way out of his nightshirt, and then lie with his head and chest over the edge of the bed and his feet reared against the wall. This picturesque attitude brought his face within about three inches of the window, and he lay there peacefully unconscious of the drift that was gradually forming at the back of his neck.

His mother thought the fresh air up here would be so good for the dear child.

By breakfast-time the ground was covered two inches deep, and it continued to snow pretty heavily until ten o'clok, so stalking was out of the question. Some idea of the outlook may be gathered from the appearance of Ole, who came in from fishing white from head to foot. Miss Meadows also looked like an ornament in a wedding-cake, as she trotted about unconcernedly under the steady downfall.

We organised a series of winter sports, had some snowballing, and built a "man," who lingered in fragments until the end of our stay. He would no doubt have remained in all the perfection of his manly beauty had not Eric stoned him with such accuracy

that first "a chunk of granite[1] took him in the abdomen," and then his head was sent flying.

These pastimes we consider much more appropriate to the country than the doings of our nearest English neighbours, a fishing-party at the other end of the lake. They, if rumour speaks truly, fish all the week and play cricket on Sunday with a squash-ball. But as it is impossible in any known part of the fjeld to get a flat piece of ground more than five yards long, the M.C.C. rules have been slightly modified to meet requirements, and a few of the more important alternations are these:—

A hit into the lake counts six; but the batsman is out, and has to go and fetch the ball.

Any one breaking a window is out, and six deducted from score, unless it is his own window, in which case he gets another innings.

It is allowable to use a landing-net to help in fielding, but not a gaff.

No one allowed more than eight inningses—which is a very pretty word now that I see it in print for the first time—in one game.

Three blocks is out, &c., &c.

They challenged us to play them home and home matches, but we are all wet-bobs at this end, and their last rule (evidently borrowed from "Aquatics" at Eton) is the only one we have been brought up with. Besides, we have no time for frivolity, and fishing, which they do for amusement, is to us a serious and solemn matter, and one to which Sunday afternoon generally seems to lend itself, so the championship has not been decided.

But we have plenty of other entertainments, though more in the way of intellect than mere physical enjoyment. There is, as has been previously mentioned, the Sæter Debating Society, which has already discussed the great subjects of astromony and ferrets and bimetallism, and things like that. And now Eric has sprung the great question upon us, "Would potatoes grow up here?" and he always adds with anxious emphasis, "in the *ground*."

[1] There is no sandstone hereabouts; it is better to misquote poets than to scandalise geologists.

Like Bobby Spencer, neither John nor I are agricultural labourers, but we have endeavoured to set at rest Eric's troubled mind by assuring him that that is the way we should try them, at any rate to begin with; we have no belief that they would succeed as creepers against the wall of the sæter, or hanging from the roof on pieces of bark.

Unfortunately we have been compelled to go without potatoes altogether, they are too heavy to bring across the fjeld in sufficiently large quantities; and moreover, owing to the lateness of Norwegian seasons, there were only the worst remnants of the old crop to be had when we left civilisation behind. We came in for the "early new" lot, during the second week in September, on our way down again.

It would be worth while, for any one returning to the same place year after year, to plant a few at the end of his stay, and see what happens. I believe they might lie dormant through the winter in this dry soil, and produce some sort of a crop next year. I remember the gardener at Gweedore, County Donegal, doing something of the kind with salad. We were at the end of June, and there was then a rood of green stuff looking like prickly comfrey, about eighteen inches high. He said the August visitors had always complained that there was not enough mustard and cress, but this year he had taken time by the forelock, and flattered himself he should be ready for them.

Sometimes we have a concert. Before the cold snap came, these were held *al fresco,* and the running fire of slaps that accompanied each song was not applause, but the destruction of mosquitoes.

But the most successful have been round the sæter fire, when all the Norse folk sit on the bed, and listen open-mouthed to our expressive rendering of "Camptown Races"—beloved of Gladstone, and Ruskin's favourite, "Off to Charlestown." We have many others of the same nature sacred to other great men. Our own spécialité is "One more River," which lends itself so perfectly to a Norwegian narrative poem, that it takes us quite half-

an-hour to work through all the verses, and even then we only stop because the banjo has become so exhausted that we can no longer recognise the tune. Really gifted troubadours like ourselves can compose poetry, of the sort required for "One more River," a great deal faster than Bobby can play it.

Here is a specimen of the sort of thing:—

'Tis the voice of the Sluggard at rising-time,
(ERIC, *ritardando).* Just one more minute to doss.[1]
And the aged are first out of bed to climb,
(BOBBY, *sotto voce).* There's one more elder to boss.

The reindeer above on the mountain-tops
(HANS, *agitato).* Makes one more breakfast of moss,
Before he's brought home to be mutton-chops,
(THE HEST, *adagissimo).* On one more cream-coloured hoss.

We ramble, and bathe, and fish till late,
(JOHN, *tempo commodo).* 'Neath one more beautiful foss.
Miss Meadows, she sits at home in state,
(MISS MEADOWS, *grazioso).* Like one more Chinaman's joss.

Then supper-time comes—the frying-pan's on;
(OLE, *con fuoco*). There's one more pancake to toss;
One moment it's here, and the next it's gone;
(MICHAEL, *perdendosi).* Ah! one more terrible loss.

Now this song might continue for many a page,
(S.T.C., *sostenuto).* Like the mariner's albatross,
But it's better to stop it before you rage,
(CHORUS, *fortissimo).* And there's one more reader too cross.
One more river!
That's the (N. or M., as the case may be) River,
One more river!
There's one more river to cross.

Someone suggested *Tableaux Vivants,* but we have not yet been reduced to this form of "entertainment" (I believe that is the conventional name for them, but anything more inappropriate I cannot imagine). The last I saw was a representation of Tenny-

[1] Doss—To sleep. Derivation: Latin, *dorsum,* from the act of lying on the back. Compare French, *dossier,* which means lying in every direction.

son's "Victim," and each scene was more and more harrowing than the last, until at the final one we were all weeping salt tears into our hats, and pretending to think scorn of each other's weakness. They sacrified, or appeared to do so, a beautiful young lady to whom I was sincerely attached, and expected me to be "entertained." Why, it does not entertain me in the least if I am merely strolling down a street and come on a gang of people sacrificing any one, even a perfect stranger who probably deserves it, when one sees it all for nothing. No; it may be true that you can "entertain" angels unawares, but when half-a-crown has disappeared at the door, the Incorporated Company of Mean Men wants a ballet.

Another enterprise which might in some stalking seasons have been successful was one which came under my notice, years ago, entitled by its promoters a "Jury Club." The Police, with a brutal lack of sentiment, described it as a "riotous and disorderly assembly." The President, when asked if he wished to make a statement, explained the basis and functions of the Society thus. He said they began on New York's Day, and met each night at a different public-house, for rational and improving conversation, and every bad word was fined a penny. There was no other subscription. As soon as the balance to their credit was deemed sufficiently large, they—still with the object of mental advancement—selected some place of interest in the United Kingdom, and stayed there as long as the funds allowed. The finances had prospered, for this was the first week in March, and they had started from a town in South Lancashire with the intention of visiting Melrose Abbey. But when the minions of the law interfered, they had only travelled the first three miles towards their Northern goal, and three-quarters of the assets had already disappeared. As far as I remember, the County took all the rest, and the saddened Jury Club departed to commence mutual improvement *de novo*.

I hardly think that under any circumstances we could have hoped to emulate the success of this Lancashire society; but this year the weather, and the fish, and deer, and in fact all kinds of

things except Bobby, have behaved so well, that we should not have collected enough to take us across the lake.

When all other amusements fail, we have only to get John to tell us stories; and notably the "Story of the Woild Man." I believe this exciting narrative has never been printed, and that there are only three living men who know it, and, if you have not heard it, there is a treat in store. I have half a mind to set down the mere words of a chapter of it, but refrain, because a tribe of people would at once arise with spurious imitations and utterly ruin its beauties. No; you must wait till you are lucky enough to meet one of the only genuine Three—one is a well-known M.P., and John and I are the other two—and you *will* be pleased.

There is an American variant, "The Story of Cannibulazzar." And this was the manner of its birth.

There was, and is, in the Western States a pioneer, an Englishman, who for many years has been always the first, or among the first, in opening out new country, and whose life has thus been spent in the least settled parts. In his wanderings he once came to a lonely hut where was lying an explorer with a broken leg, whose companion had gone off to bring assistance. C. put him together again, and said he would stay with him till the other man came back, which was not until four days afterwards.

In the meantime the sick man clamoured for entertainment. He could not read, and asked C. to read to him, but the only literature in the hut was an old copy of the *Sporting Times*. At last C. in desperation took his, and pretended to find in it the Adventures of Cannibulazzar. For three days and nights, with brief intervals for refreshment, those astonishing Adventures went on, and when on the fourth the friend returned, C. was still as far as ever from the end of his hero's career.

However, he handed over his charge, said goodbye, and wandered out again into the wild and wooly west. The injured man waited impatiently till his friend had straightened things up, and then gave him the paper, and said, "Well now, let's hear how old Cannibulazzar got out of that hanging racket."

I heard this part of the tale from the friend, and he assured me they were both nearly shot before he could persuade the invalid that there was not, and never had been, a word about Cannibulazzar in the whole paper. And then he simply thirsted to slay C. because now the further performances of that amazing person would never be known.

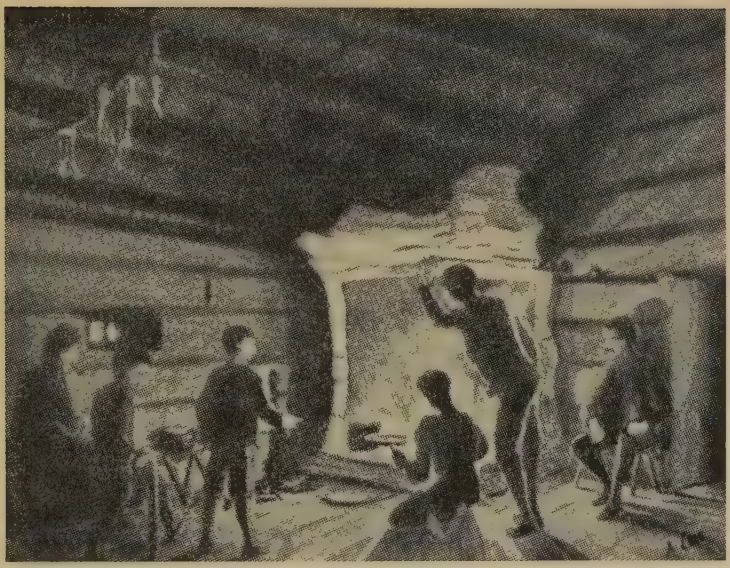
There were other things happening in that country quite as entertaining as any of Cannibulazzar's prodigies. For instance, there was the City—it may be libellous to mention names, but it stands to this day—which wanted a supply of water. After negotiations, a big water company engaged to provide it, on the security of a high rate to be levied on all buildings within a halfmile radius of the centre of the town. They brought the water at considerable expense, and then one fine day the inhabitants put their houses on rollers and moved them outside that magic circle.

So there the town stands, a monument to something, but I am not quite certain what, with a round open space exactly a mile in diameter in the middle of it; and the Water Company has "gone"—so I was informed by the Mayor—"where the woodbine twineth."

Then there was the man to whom a cattle company owed 700 dollars, and would not pay. One day he met their cashier driving across the prairie, held him up, ran him into town at the end of a "gun," made him draw a cheque for the amount, and then departed to other regions. When he thought things had quieted down sufficiently, he returned and gave himself up to the Sheriff, and was prosecuted for his lawless behaviour. The jury promptly acquitted him, and voted him a new hat out of the county fund; a beautifully inconsequent action that has always pleased me very much.

Such like things and more also happen to the "Woild Man." We never tired of his unparalleled[1] story, and though of course we could not treat ourselves to such a luxury every night, it was pleasant to know that whenever "the woild fellow up and away

[1] M. de Rougemont had not then burst upon a Wide (awake) World.



Panacke night

wid him," it was only the prelude to further and more entrancing excitements.

When all is said and done, there is probably nothing that creates as much uproarious amusement as the Pancake night. The method of producing this delicacy in an open air camp has already been described in the earlier doings of the "Three in Norway," but by the fitful light of the sæter fire its movements are even more erratic and disconcerting.

We were always allowed in my childhood to go into the kitchen and toss one or two—after the necessary supply had been cooked—and long years of practice commencing at such an early date, have resulted in an ability to throw the thing into the air with a reasonable prospect of catching it again. So when we determined to plunge into this form of dissipation, I was told off to fry one apiece for a beginning; and after that it was every man for himself—and the devil as a rule took the pancake. It is a charac-

teristic habit of this art-product that the first one *always,* and generally the second also, sticks to the pan, and even the best cook does not expect them to toss properly. After that things ought to get into good working order, and the rest should follow smoothly and without mishap. In my home these first two were always dedicated to the retriever, "Rap" or "Bang," or whoever it might be that had the position of Lord High Dog inside the house at the time.

But a retriever would have been no good to Eric; what he wanted was a good wide-ranging setter. or perhaps a gazehound. It was like a conjuring trick; at one moment there was a beautifully-shaped pancake lying in the pan, fried to a most delicate golden brown on the under-side, and the next, a lift of the arm, and Presto! it was gone.

And, for the first three or four, no one had the slightest idea whither. Some said into the fire, but the better opinion was that it fled up the chimney. It was very dispiriting, for Eric has a natural genius for cookery, and turns out any kind of food that he tackles very well; but of course tossing pancakes is not cookery, it is sleight-of-hand and athletic sports.

Finally, he did get a thing that was at any rate brown on both sides, and handed over the pan to Bobby. Then there was a variation; Bobby with perfect regularity caught just half of his cake each time, the other half with equal regularity going into the fire. However, he soon had collected many more half pancakes than any one except a schoolboy could eat, so he did not fare badly.

Then we resigned the remains of the batter to the Norwegians, who had been watching the performance with huge delight.

Michael was the first to try, but he announced that he should help his cake over with a knife, and this was received with such a storm of disapprobation, that he retired in confusion, and one of the boys took his place. And so it went on for an hour, with shouts of laughter as each careful cook was deprived of the tempting morsel just when another two minutes would have completed the triumph; and the fire was gradually choked with mangled remains.

The boys, however, were not to be beaten, and must have practised the art secretly after the first humiliation, for a few days afterwards Sivert was seen going through the performance without a hitch, and on his face was a sort of bored and *blasé* look, as of one who would welcome any little breakdown to relieve the monotony of unvarying success.

Pancakes have, of course, only been a possibility since Michael brought us a supply of eggs; ninety-six they were when they left the valley; and very nearly all survived the journey, which says a good deal for their packing. They had another conspicuous merit, in being quite fresh at the commencement of their career, and have, with few exceptions, kept uncommonly well in the cool air up here.

When therefore John, who on his favourite tack of "Rations" had been making a careful inspection of their box, announced, "The eggs are going strong," we received the news with a groan of dismay. John hastened to explain that he did not mean what we meant, and that his statement was in fact only latter-day English for "the eggs are continuing their hitherto satisfactory progress, with every symptom of further prosperity." But he was too late to stop the Poet, who had already commenced the following Lament, and was deaf to all entreaties till it was finished:—

EXCELSIOR[1]

It was the Commissariat Chief,
And loud he sang this song:
"Cheer up! cheer up! Away with grief!
The eggs are going strong.

"What though the coffee's naught but dregs,
The bacon won't last long;
We laugh at Famine, while the eggs
Are going well and strong.

"Apples are happily right, although
The rice that's left is wrong;

[1] He says this words means, "The eggs are higher," and gives Long-fellow as his authority.

The game is high; the flour runs low;
But the eggs are going strong.

"For jam we soon shall have to seek,
Its life we can't prolong,
A se'nnight more will see it weak,
But the eggs are going strong."

Then to the Chieftain said the Cook:
"I've tried them with a prong,
And of my nose tight hold I took;
The eggs *are* going strong.

"They smell like raki-fish in kegs,
From Jomund to Hong-Kong;
Just sniff this one! Oh lor! the eggs
Have gone dis*tink*tly strong."

On this night, the 2nd of September, there was a glorious display of Northern Lights, splendid arches of radiance lifting in ever-changing effulgence, &c., &c. You can see the full description for yourself in the English newspapers of the 3rd; at any rate that was where *we* saw it, ten days later, when we were on our way down to Christiania. The fact is, the spectacle took place, as far as we can make out, while we were frying pancakes, and not one of our ethereally-minded crew ever noticed a flicker of it.

I used, before Bobby went to school, to spend the fine evenings in teaching him elementary astronomy, which sometimes resulted in his staying up a little longer than laid down in Queen's Regulations. On one of these occasions I heard his nurse wondering, with fine irritation, "Why on earth you and your Daddy can't look at the stars at a proper time of day, instead of waiting till just as you ought to be going to bed."

No one could accuse any of us now of gazing at the heavens when we ought to be attending to things of earth. *Fiat dinner, ruat aurora borealis*,[1] is the noble principle on which we act. But we were lucky enough to get an encore exhibition a few nights after-

[1] "Fiat dinner, ruat aurora borealis." = "Let us have dinner, damn the Northern Lights."

wards, and one which we had not to share with the seething millions of Great Britain. There were in fact several evenings on which the Merry Dancers were more or less visible, though only two on which they made a really good show.

It struck me as being a good expressive title for this modest record of our doings, and I mentioned the idea to John. He said: "Northern Lights? Oh certainly, capital name; Northern Lights and—Livers."

It just shows you the sort of person John is. But you never know where to have him. Now, for instance, there are the mosquitoes. It took a long time to persuade John that the Last Mosquito was dead, but having once begun to assert it, wild omnibus horses will not induce him to retract. He was a little puzzled this evening to account for the presence of about twenty of these ravenous brutes on his neck, but only for one moment. In the next he was explaining glibly that the Last of the '98 Mosquitoes was truly dead; these were the early hatch of the '99 crop, "*fin de siècle* mosquitoes."

"Neck or nothing mosquitoes," Eric called them; but of course as soon as we knew that they did not really belong to this season, their presence ceased to annoy.

One more river

CHAPTER XV

Fjeld Life

The intention of this book, which has possibly not yet been detected, is to draw a faithful picture of the ordinary every-day life that awaits any one who cares to make trial of the Norwegian fjeld. A collection of sporting sketches often seems to me to err in giving only accounts of the most brilliantly successful episodes, and ignoring the more numerous but less eventful days. For this reason the stalking scenes described here have been picked simply as typical examples of the varied experiences that may be expected, without any regard to the value of their results.

Curiously enough—possibly by the working of some occult Law of Compensation—it has happened to every "Norwegian" of my acquaintance that the most glorious rewards of the fjeld have been secured by the least expenditure of time and thought and trouble. The Stor Bock who casually bounced up when you were not expecting or deserving him, may have made a better trophy for your wall, but he is not so dear to memory as the smaller beast after whom you toiled all day before the fateful shot; which shot, by the way, was possibly a miss. The reader will perhaps bear this in mind if he should be disposed to think these records less exciting than an unbroken series of triumphs over the biggest bucks.

The latter events happen—sometimes—but not often; and the man who wants to get a really fine head may have to try for it not once or twice or thrice, but year after year, before he gains

the meed of hard work. Judging from my own experience, the prize-list does not come out nearly so high as one good beast in a season.

Chances at smaller deer are of course more probable; this year, for instance, I could have shot at something over a dozen during the month that we spent on the fjeld, yet up to the first week in September neither of us had come within hail of the much-sought Stor Bock, though he had left spoor to rejoice our hearts once or twice. But much more frequent had been the trail of the Serpent, the native hunter, and still more unpleasant signs of his presence in the shape of wounded deer had been visible on no less than four occasions.

One day I crossed the lake to try Ulva-tind, the rather despised mountain to the west. Walking along the shore for a short distance at its foot, we saw close under the bank three fluffy balls of pied feathers floating and nodding gently to the ripples. "Divers," Michael said, though to me they looked too small, and presently Michael also changed his mind, and called them ducks. They were 300 yards away when we first caught sight of them, but before long we had crept quietly to within fifteen yards and found that they really were Black-throated Divers after all, but fast asleep, with their heads so marvellously tucked away under their wings that even at this short distance they looked hardly bigger than ducks. Presently they drifted so close together that I could have sent a bullet through all three, which I believe would have been a record in the shooting of these wary birds; and directly afterwards, for reasons best known to themselves, they awoke, and in a moment seemed to have doubled in size as the snaky neck and lance-like head shot out.

They were an old bird and two young ones, but the children were of two different hatches; one almost grown up, and the other only just beginning to get proper feathers. I do not know whether this is a custom of the Colymbi, but there was no doubt of it in the present case. The old hen or goose, or whatever her correct name is, charged straight at us, and all three of them

seemed to have lost their heads, for instead of diving, the young ones swam slowly away in a hesitating fashion, while the old bird made frantic dashes almost to our feet, uttering her harsh croaking cry, and at times flapping on the water as if with a broken wing. She was so near to us for a full minute that Michael amused himself by splashing stones into the lake all round her, and I was very glad to have such an unusual chance of seeing this shy creature so plainly.

Ulva-tind is a favourite haunt of ptarmigan. On a fine day such as this one might shoot a great number; they perched and ran on almost every likely place that we passed, and were so tame that I managed to get some photographs at distances of three or four yards.

The geological formation on this side of the lake is the same—stratified metamorphic; and it feels just like that, or even worse, to your feet. The ridges of rock stand up in very abrupt sharply-cut steps, and run with considerable regularity for great distances; a large area at the tops is in fact very much like a huge petrified ploughed field, with furrows twenty or thirty feet deep, and as many yards wide. The bottoms of these dykes are of course full of snow, so that in crossing the ground at right angles to the strata you are constantly climbing up the side of a steep ridge of sharp-edged rock, down the other side, across a long canal-like piece of snow, and another rocky ridge, and another moat of snow beyond it. On the extreme tops of these ridges, which are usually almost a knife-edge, innumerable stones are perched in rows, their size anything from a plum-pudding to a piano, but exactly how they got there I am not geologist enough to say. They are not, however, true boulders, in my humble opinion, and I magine that their position is of modern date and owing in some way to the action of the weather between summer and winter. The effect is very curious and artificial-looking.

Deer had been on the range each time that Eric or I tried it, but always the day before; nevertheless it is a good piece of country, and it was merely bad luck that we should never have happened

to be there at the same time as our quarry. Once I found the bone of a hind-leg, but how it got there by itself, and where the rest of the creature had gone, was a dark and deadly mystery.

Up there also the signs of lemmings were more common than elsewhere, but not one of the queer bad-tempered little beasts did we see during the whole of our rambles. Three summers ago, Hans told me, was the last "Lemming-year," when they swarmed in the well-known wonderful profusion; and nature having provided the lemmings, provided also a special troop of predatory tribes to deal with them. The Snowy Owls in particular on these occasions, and I believe also Goshawks and Rough-legged Buzzards, continue breeding without intermission, filling their nests with a mixture of eggs and chicks—and lemmings—as fast as there is room for them.

From the top of Ulva-tind we looked down into a magnificent valley further west, and another big lake at 1000 feet higher level than Nord Vand; but for some reason that was not apparent to me the deer seemed to have less liking for it than the dales on the eastern side, possibly because, in spite of its wildness, it was a few miles nearer to the haunts of man. And there we saw the last belated lingerer from the fishing-hut making his way back to the valley, a tiny dot followed by a slightly larger one in the shape of his horse and baggage, and knew that now at last we were left undisputed monarchs of all we surveyed.

Another morning dawned with clear frosty air and a fresh fall of snow on the tops, and the direction of the wind made it best that we should walk up the valley together, before separating to hunt the range on either side.

A little farther on we parted, but while still within a hundred yards, there was a low whistle from the others, and looking back we saw Eric grovelling in the approved manner among the rocks, while coming down the hill towards us, a quarter of a mile away, was a reindeer. We dropped into a gully and went back to them, and presently were all within shot of a hind and *three* calves.

This was certainly a novelty to me; two calves are so fre-

quently seen suckled by one mother, that I fancy twins at a birth is a fairly common occurrence. But "Queen's Bounty" must be very unusual; the men indeed would not allow that these three all belonged to the hind, but said one at least must be an "orphan child," and very likely they were right. But at any rate they were all feeding from her, and were apparently all of one age, with fair-sized horns.

They were rather fidgety and nervous, and though the hind lay down once, and we crept almost within camera range, she was up again directly, and presently must have caught a glimpse of someone, for she trotted off with her large family of babes or foundlings, and crossed the valley, so the reader must be content with this attempt to sketch the group.

Then again we separated, Eric going South, and I to the North; and again we had a hard day's walking. On one snow slope we came on drops of blood, and found where a wounded deer had been pursued by two hunters and probably killed, for just above this place a big calf jumped out from the stones and stood staring, and at intervals giving the startled grunting cry which they use in times of perplexity and danger. It stayed within 200 yards for a long time; trotting and galloping backwards and forwards, staring and stamping, and evidently quite unable to make us out, and I suppose, poor thing, hoping that we might in some way be likely to bring back its lost mother.

The reindeer on snow is a curious mixture of grace and clumsiness. Seen from the side it is a marvel of perfect movement, and has I think as beautiful an action as any four-legged creature, whether at the free elastic high-stepping trot, with head and tail up, or at the splendid slinging gallop which leaves the miles of snow behind with such apparent ease. But when you are straight behind him, the beauty of movement is no longer visible, but the great splay feet sprawl out sideways in a very ungainly manner, giving a rolling, laboured appearance, with none of the graceful daintiness which attracts one's notice so strongly in the broadside view.

The trot is the reindeer's normal working gait. He can, and when badly frightened does, gallop on snow at tremendous speed, but after a few hundred yards or less he usually settles down to the more modest pace, and the hunter will find that it conveys him out of the neighbourhood with quite sufficient rapidity.

The spoor is a matter of never-ending interest; one may learn and go on learning year after year, and always there is more to gather from it. I have taken many photographs of tracks in various stages, and belonging to various members of the family, but even the careful camera is not clever enough to distinguish the minute differences which are of such importance in the art of reading spoor. The reason being, I think, that the eye can detect these in mark after mark over a long length of track, but not when confined to two or three hoofprints only, such as a lens could capture at once.

With great respect for the lamented Sherlock Holmes (who I still hope may climb out of that abyss one of these days), I have always doubted the utility of his hands-and-knees-and-magnifying-glass method of examining footprints. The reason that the different characteristics of tracks are not observed by the untrained eye, is not because they are so small as to be invisible, but because they are—to that eye—so inconspicuous as to escape notice. In the same way the townsman will stare straight at a grouse in the heather, or a rabbit in the bracken, or a trout poised above the gravel in the stickle, and will not see them; not because they are too small, but because he does not know what they look like in those positions: he does not know, in fact, what he is looking for, and a magnifying glass would in nowise help him. And to the man who does know what to look for, the lens might be a hindrance, because it alters the proportions to which his mind is accustomed, and still more, because its field is too limited. My own belief, after seeing good trackers in more than one country, is that it is a positive disadvantage to be near the impressions; and for this reason an expert will often do his work better from a horse than on foot.

Undoubtedly the tiny indications that a beast leaves behind him, such for instance as stones moved a trifle so as to expose new soil,

are much more easily seen a few yards ahead than at your feet. On snow again, the freshly thrown out particles which the sun has not yet rounded off, are invisible under your nose; but look a hundred yards ahead, and there you will see without difficulty the very different character of the track made five minutes ago and that of the hour before, though you may not be able to state exactly in what the difference consists. The fact is, I think, that the distant marks being seen edgeways, or in section as it were, catch the eye much more readily than the near ones, which are only presented as a faintly drawn ground-plan. In the same way plowers' eggs in a fallow are much more conspicuous a dozen yards in front of you than at your feet.

Interesting again is the contrast between the great holes pressed in the soft snow of yesterday afternoon, with the prints of the dewclaws deeply marked, and the slight, almost invisible tracks made by perhaps the same buck on the frozen surface this morning; and yet the absence of freshness, the rounding and blurring by sun and wind, is as unmistakable in the former as is the indefinable impress of newness on the latter.

In this clear air the distance at which wellmarked spoor can be seen upon snow is amazing. I am afraid to say how far it can be detected by the naked eye, lest those who know only murkier atmospheres should think the longbow at work, but certainly my belief is that under favourable conditions two miles is not beyond the truth; a glass will give a farther range, but not very much more, because the power of covering a big field at a glance is essential, and that the glass cannot do.

This ease of tracking enabled us to-day to "ring" a herd of reindeer, the only time I happen to have seen it done, into a rough little depression of mingled rocks and snow almost at the top of a flattish dome-shaped mountain. Seven of them had undoubtedly gone up into that stony shelter within the hour, and *Vestigia nulla retrorsum*,[1] which does not mean "Don't reverse," though I once heard it so translated in a ball-room.

[1] "Vestigia nulla retrosum." = "No tracks lead back again."

But to Michael's grief, they had the usual fault, "all small," and we left them undisturbed in their lurking-place, and continued to wander on and spy for something better. Now it was five o'clock, and we had been for an hour facing towards home, when he touched my arm and pointed to the sky-line, rather behind us and to the South. (A Norseman, like a Scot, does all his locating by the points of the compass, not like the Englishman, by right hand or left.) There, moving at a fairly speedy trot, was a long line of deer, half-a-dozen small ones leading; then a couple of big bucks, and then, after a little interval, a hind and two calves. They were a long way off, and going away from our valley; but after seeing those two bucks there was no hesitation, we turned straight round and went back as hard as we could. But where should we make for? It was rather guess-work, for they had the whole of Norway open to them, and we were sure they had been disturbed by something, though we hoped not badly. But Michael was very confident that they were heading for a certain pass into the next valley, about two miles from where we were, and our object must be to get there before them. It was just a race between us, assuming that that was their point; but he thought we ought to do it, for they had a full mile farther to go.

So away we went as hard as we could, first across the wide valley on fairly level but woefully rough ground; through the big torrent which runs out from the converging feeders of snow and ice that fill the upper gullies, now luckily fordable without much danger, after the cold of the last three days. Then up the steep rocks that hemmed us in at the eastern end, and in spite of our good condition, this part of the run began to tell, and we were thankful to stand a moment and rest on the big snow slope above them. There was no need for concealment; the deer were far out of our sight behind the range; so we sped up the snow without hesitation, and at last were on he ridge, and approaching so near to the pass that caution became necessary.

I do not know how long it took us to make this forced march, but it seemed a very short time, and the deer had half as far again

to go; and yet they beat us in the race. Michael ducked down, and about 200 yards to our right I saw the hind and calves, but where were the others? We dared not move to look, for that wretched hind was in full view, but from her original position at the rear of the procession, we feared that we were too late, and it was soon proved. The race had been such a near thing that we had actually cut the herd in two: the bucks had just passed, and the hind and calves were arriving at the very moment that we reached the gorge. Thirty seconds earlier and they would have been delivered into our hands.

We lay quiet until the rearguard had passed, and then, the wind being perfectly safe, followed as quickly as possible, and in a few minutes were on the ridge beyond the pass, hoping to have them still within reach. But alas! they were half a mile away, going at top speed up a long stretch of gently rising snow-field on the other side, and it was evident that something had frightened them again.

All we knew was that it could not have been our doing, but we followed the tracks some little way, and soon came on the cause of their hasty departure. It was the spoor, not many hours old, of two hunters, probably the same whose fatal work we had seen in the morning. The herd had been trotting gently enough until they came on this ill-omened track, but probably one whiff of it was enough, and they were over the hills and far away.

So our perseverance, as most virtues are, was its own reward, and we resumed after this little interlude of four five miles extra, the weary walk home. The man who hunts reindeer in the Norway of the pervading native hunter, must expect to meet with very many disappointments. One need never fear the drawback which I lately heard ascribed to a certain Scotch place—viz., that stags were so plentiful that the trouble was to get out of the house without disturbing the forest. The reindeer are neither so numerous nor so easily reconciled to the presence of man as to ever cause difficulties of that nature, but in any case the head-hunter as opposed to the meat-hunter will always be very heavily handicap-

ped, and his trials seem likely to grow greater rather than less, unless some sweeping changes are made in the conditions under which the sport has at present to be followed.

We came to-day on two rather interesting relics of the good old times when reindeer were numerous everywhere, and might be shot all through the winter. The first was an old wooden ramrod, and though I dare say there are still native hunters using muzzle-loading rifles, this particular stick was so worn and weatherbeaten that without doubt it had been lying on the hill for many years.

The other was a portion of a ski, the well-known long Norse snow-shoe, like a much turned up sleigh runner, and its date could not have been far different from that of the ramrod. I forget when the close time was fixed to exclude the winter hunting, but it is not very long ago. Before that time hunters have vividly described to me the delights of pursuing the reindeer on these awkward-looking contrivances. The daylight in the high fjeld is much better during the long dark months than it is in the lowlands, both from the greater altitude and the unbroken expanse of pure snow; and one of the Jotunheim men evidently believed there was not sport to equal the weary climb up the mountain until well above the herd, and the headlong rush downhill into the very midst of the startled creatures, floundering deep in the snow over which their enemy came so smoothly gliding.

No doubt it was gloriously exciting, though the actual killing of the deer must have savoured rather of butchery; and in their interest it is well that the method has been forbidden.

It sounds perhaps curious that in this wide expanse of pathless desert one human being should ever come upon the insignificant scraps left by an old-time predecessor, but it may serve to show how naturally the same route is followed year after year by men on the same errand.

The fjeld does not encourage the transport of unnecessary baggage, and partly from this cause, and perhaps—who knows?—a little from superstition, it seems that no Englishman has ever taken up proper weighing appliances. The size to which reindeer

grow is therefore, to the best of my belief, undecided, and there is a wide divergence of opinion among those who have had the best opportunities of judging.

Mr. Chapman, in his delightful "Wild Norway," estimates his best buch at thirty-two stone, and I see no reason to doubt that Norwegian deer may reach this weight, though I feel tolerably sure that nothing so big has happened to come my way, and have guessed my own best at something under rather than over twenty-eight stone. The woodland cariboo of British Columbia—which is really only the reindeer under more favourable surroundings—is supposed to weigh up to thirty-six stone, and it is even asserted in printed books up to fifty! But I am not trying to believe the latter figure.

CHAPTER XVI

A Last Stalk

The last stalking day came, and again the heights were covered with new snow. A glorious morning it was as Hans and I threaded our way through the birches, where the ryper were laughing wildly at some early-rising joke; probably at finding their bath water frozen.

The wind was westerly; and awkward quarter for us, for we wanted to try "Österdal," and our only way into it was straight down wind. This valley has the shape of a bulbous decanter, with a long narrow entrance at the west end, widening out to two or three miles square at the east. There are several smaller bays or valleys opening into it at certain points near the east end, and game coming into it would be most likely to do so by way of these tributary dales, but it is only in a few places that the sides are too precipitous for deer to go up or down if so minded. The most important of these places is a large corrie on the southern side, in the shape of a big ∩. This gradually narrows till it ends in a veritable *cul de sac;* the sides being sheer black precipices, while the bend is occupied by an immense "brae" or mass of eternal snow, far too steep for any creature to climb, its towering heights lost in a belt of cloud, and the face scored with many a huge crevasse through which the nether ice shimmers cold and blue. The ground inclosed by this ∩ is a particularly good place for deer, as in fact is all the wide part of the dale, and we entered the bottle neck in a very hopeful frame of mind.

The wind was a great trouble. The natural way up the valley

would of course be in the bottom, along the river-side, but to-day that was out of the question; we should have disturbed the whole of our promised land. So we climbed up the northern side, and scrambled as best we could along the shoulder, high above the dale, where no trace of our presence could taint the lower air.

There is no walking harder than this. The hillsides are seamed every few yards by full or empty watercourses, each of which means a troublesome climb down, and a not much easier one up the other bank. The slope itself is so steep that the strain on the ankles is very great; tiring detours up hill and down again have repeatedly to be made to avoid showing yourself on the numerous snow-wreaths, and painful falls *will* happen now and then, however carefully you pick your way.

We worked slowly along the shoulder, stopping at short intervals to spy the opposite side of the dale, and of course keeping a very careful watch on our own side, both for spoor and the makers of spoor. But it was midday before we made a dead heat of discovering two deer, a small buck and a hind, on a big patch of snow a few hundred yards away on the north side, and a little above us.

They were in a very good place for stalking, but we had such confidence that the cold weather had brought deer into our country, that even Hans (who is a very bird-in-the-hand hunter) raised no objection to leaving them behind us, at least for the present. So we crept out of sight, and continued our eastward scramble.

We had now arrived at a very commanding position on the brink of one of the smaller dales, almost opposite to the Ω-shaped corrie; and there we sat down, and spied most carefully all round the widest part of the main valley.

I had never seen Hans make so long a survey with the glass; ordinarily he trusts more to his unaided eyesight, but he had a good reason for this minute inspection, in the coating of new snow which came half-way down the slopes on every side, and presently he shut up the telescope, and said confidently—

"There are many deer in Österdal to-day."

It was very pleasant hearing, but it soon came out that we still had to find them. All that Hans had seen was fresh spoor in the bottom of the valley, and he had satisfied himself that is was more recent than any of the tracks which were visible on the hill-sides, or in the passes. It was a very perfect piece of fjeld-craft, and Hans must have had wonderful faith in his observations, for from that moment he behaved as if the deer were unquestionably somewhere very near us.

We crossed the north-eastern tributary dale, and were at last with our faces to the wind, and could begin to work homewards again in the lowest part of the valley, much more secure from detection than we had been all the morning.

Mile after mile we tramped, our progress necessarily very slow, for we had to treat each new ridge or spit of rising ground as if a good herd might be just beyond it. We reckoned from the tracks that there were nearly twenty in one lot, besides a few scattered indications of single deer. Nothing however rewarded all our efforts, and I was beginning to fear that somewhere, somehow, some flaw existed in our apparently perfect reasoning.

Now we were on the rocky shore of a little lake, barely a mile from the horse-shoe corrie, and this was almost the last likely place, so we waited and spied, if anything more keenly and persistently than ever. And there at last I had the huge delight of finding them, right under the western precipice, near the mouth of the *cul de sac,* in ground so rough and broken, so furrowed by numerous gullies, that it seemed at this distance as if there would be little difficulty in approaching them. Fifteen we made out—there may have been a few more—most of them feeding very quietly at the foot of the cliffs, but two or three high up on the shaly debris that accumulates in a kind of rubbish heap below any steep rocks of this kind.

Soon we were within a quarter of a mile; the herd had fed farther into the bay, into still more broken ground, and now we could see that four of them were big bucks with clean horns, and two of the four were *very* big.

They continued to feed nearer to the brae, and presently all disappeared into a little hollow in the very mouth of the horse-shoe bay; and we covered at top speed the intervening space during this lucky moment. There was nothing now but a flat bit of snow through which numerous stones protruded, and thirty yards more would have brought us to the lip of the little glen, when a wretched hind climbed out of it 150 yards from us, and we had to petrify ourselves where we were. There was little fear of detection as long as we stayed quiet; for though on snow, the jutting stones were so thickly scattered that we never doubted our ability to pass for a couple of extra blocks.

Presently two small bucks and a calf joined the hind. and the four wandered slowly about the craggy terrace on to which they had climbed, and seemed to be eating the rough black lichen with which the rocks were covered. With only one sentry it might have been possible to snatch opportunities for advancing, but with four pair of eyes on such a watch-tower, it was hopeless to move; and though I was entirely hidden behind a big stone, it was as much as I dared do to use the little glass and admire the graceful ease with which they strayed about the rugged ledges of the rock. It has been the fashion to show the reindeer in drawings—and to some extent photography justifies it—as rather heavy and thickset in appearance, but that is not the impression derived from a view of the live animal in his native wilds. A big buck, it is true, from the size of his sweeping antlers and the profusion of shaggy mane that clothes his neck, has a grand and perhaps massive appearance, especially when standing still, but I cannot imagine any creature more beautiful and gracefully picturesque than he looks when moving about among the stern surroundings of huge rocks and frozen fields of snow. My first feeling after killing one is growing to be so strongly remorseful, that I have several times been within measurable distance of vowing not to shoot another. One of these days it will be done, and whether I shall be happier afterwards is a question that troubles me exceedingly.

That, however, comes after the shot; during the stalk I am filled with murderous thoughts, and my hatred of those four young deer was intense.

It was too bad; there we were within 100 yards of the two finest heads in Norway—they may not really have been quite that, but I felt sure they were at the time—and not a scrap of them could I see, because those four miserable upstarts would go gaping and staring about on rocks which could not have afforded them any reasonable attractions whatever.

It was freezing, but did not feel particularly cold, as we were warmly clad; still, lying flattened out on a snow-drift for an hour and a half is not a comforting pastime, and I was beginning to think of desperate measures, when a new and rather disquieting thought came into my head (it had been in Hans's for some time, as he told me afterwards), and that was the wind. The nominal direction was from west to east, right across the mouth of the corrie, and as we were lying due north of the deer, it might be thought that our position was a perfectly safe one. But wind that comes over a hill does not continue its proper direction any more than all the water in a river will be found running downwards, and though this fact is constantly before one's mind in calculating chances while stalking, I had not hitherto given it any attention in the present case, because we had been too much in the open for back currents to operate.

But the gradual approach of the deer to the inner end of the bay had brought us nearer to the zone of possible eddies, and a little incident, common enough in these precipitous places, suddenly reminded me of it. In spite of the frost, the sun was hot enough to melt snow wherever its rays struck on the eastern cliffs, and presently a big stone was dislodged by this means, and came down with a rather terrifying rattle to the bottom. The deer in sight stared a moment, and I saw some tips of antlers in the glen as the owner's head went up in inquiry; but stones are so perpetually falling in the mountains that I do not think deer ever pay much attention to them. This one, however, brought down a cloud of

powdery snow, and the white dust was twisted round and round in a miniature whirlwind by the eddying breeze close under the deer, and I felt confident that we were perfectly safe in the matter of scent, if only those tiresome Four would give us a chance in the matter of sight.

Even that came at last, but it sent our hearts into our mouths, for, far up against the sky of palest, purest blue, a raven came sliding down the dale on set wings, quietly cawing sliding down the dale on set wings, quietly cawing or almost cooing in that very subdued voice that he keeps for moments of good temper and general satisfaction with the world—moments which are, unfortunately, anything but a good sample of his normal state. Would he see us? We crouched motionless against our sheltering stones, and still the gentle coo went on, and now he was almost past, and the deer had not paid the slightest attention to him.

And then suddenly he detected us, and the mild cawing changed to the well-known harsh croak, that many people may imagine to be his only kind of conversation. Up went the heads of the visible deer; one of them which was lying down leaped to its feet, and the four came swiftly down from the rocks, and into the glen in front, where the unseen herd still were. We feared it was all up with our chance, but at any rate we would seize the opportunity to get across the snow patch, and within sight of the glen; and as we did so, the last of the herd disappeared at a speedy trot round a corner, into another winding of the hollow nearer to the brae.

Another run and a little crawl, and we were again within easy shot of the depression, and knew that the deer must be close in front, though they were still invisible. We crept cautiously on, and in another moment two small bucks mounted the farther side, and stood gazing in a meditative manner on the high ground. The raven had departed after his attempt at mischief-making, and apparently the alarm had subsided, so he had done us nothing but good, ill-omened brute that he was.

We were now nearer the deer than ever; the two sentinels were

the farthest of the lot, and I guessed them at 130 yards, but this nearness was in itself a danger, for we were now so much more under the influence of the brae, that the possibilities of wind were a serious matter. On the other hand, the opposing armies had moved so far into the *cul de sac,* that it looked almost impossible for a skirmish to be avoided. Within a hundred yards on the left hand was the great wall of nearly perpendicular cliff, and it was absolutely certain that the deer must give a perfect broadside chance if they tried to pass that way. Straight ahead was the wide funnel-like sweep of the impassable brae, a round lake at its foot filled with great masses of broken ice from the heights above. On the right was another frowing rampart of rock, not quite as upright as the opposing cliffs, but perfectly unclimbable. This, however, was perhaps 300 yards away, and there was such terribly rugged and broken ground between us and its foot that there was not the same certainty of getting a shot, if escape from the tight place were attempted on that side. And we dared not go nearer to it because of the wind.

Nevertheless the herd was so surrounded by natural obstacles on three sides, while we held a post on the fourth, that if any one had suggested a doubt as to getting a shot, I should have laughed at the notion. A hit is always uncertain, but a chance I *knew* I must have, sooner or later, in the situation in which we now were.

Presently the sentinels moved a little farther away, and just gave us a hurried opportunity to creep a few yards nearer, and now for the first time since the distant view so long before, I could see the glorious horns of my two big bucks—they were *mine* by this time—whenever they put up their heads. All the herd except the two on watch were packed together in a wee little dip, and every now and then we could hear the bleating of a calf, or a rattle of antlers, as a couple of bucks had a real or playful scuffle about something.

Once I saw the ridge of a big back moving slowly along as its owner fed, and more often than not some of the splendid spreading points were visible. I hung those two grand heads up at home in

various suitable situations, and was beginning to kill the second pair of bucks also, when the forest of horns disappeared; and as the sentries had not moved, it was evident that they were lying down.

So another hour passed, and we were beginning to freeze fairly stiff on our snow bank, when the slight clattering noise told us they were up again; and presently one of the smaller deer fed out of the glen to our left, not more than eighty yards away.

And then in a moment it was all over. He had reached the line of the eddying backwash of air; he twisted round, and we heard the clash of those beautiful antlered heads, and the castanet-like crackings[1] of many hoofs, as the whole herd took to flight. It was now or never; deer that have got the scent of human beings are not to be beguiled into thinking it might be a mistake, as may occasionally happen with those that have only *seen* something. I jumped up ready to shoot, but alas! the herd was streaming out of the glen in a dense mass, less than 150 yards away, but so hopelessly mixed up that to pick those big bucks, or any single deer at all, was impossible.

Hans implored me to shoot, but I meant to have those heads or none, and was not going to begin any "paa Slump" practice. Even now there was hope, for the deer were running in their alarm straight for the big snow brae, and we were still in the mouth of the ∩.

But they knew more than we did. Five hundred yards away they turned sharply by the iceberg loch, and dived into one of the moat-like gullies which ran below the right-hand cliffs, and in a moment they were all out of sight. We guessed the nature of the place, and ran as hard as we could across the broken line of rugged terraces that lay between us and the great wall; but climbing up and down that long succession of rocky ridge and furrow was terribly slow work, and before we could cut their line the

[1] My own knowledge does not tell me exactly how this curious noise is made, but the usual explanation is, that it is the widely separated halves of the hoof striking against each other as they are lifted from the ground. It seems reasonable enough.

deer had passed close in front of us, safely hidden in the deep snow-dyke, and in another moment they came out to daylight again, at the corner of the precipice in the jaws of the bay. They galloped round it in single file; but even if I could have held a rifle steady after that breakneck run, it was a hopeless place, for the full glare of the sun was straight behind them, and I could distinguish nothing but a confused blur of hurried movement in a glowing ruddy haze. They were gone! without a shot—all my beautiful heads, and skins, and haunches of venison—and I could have cried with disappointment, only that poor Hans was so much more unhappy, that I had to bestir myself to comfort him.

It was a difficult matter, for the time-honoured device of telling ourselves they were after all only middling heads was too transparent, and I think the best we could do was to load with abuse that unlucky beast who fed out at the wrong end of the glen.

And when I came to think matters over, the whole herd had been at our mercy. If, while they were resting, Hans had gone to the gully by which they eventually escaped, and either shown himself or given them his wind there, they must have come within shot past me in order to get out; and if they did not like that, they had no other course but to retreat to the foot of the brae, where they would have been absolutely cornered. I have never seen a herd in a similar situation before, but it is said that it has occasionally happened, both in Norway and with cariboo in Canada, and that sooner than face the terrors of breaking through, the poor things have run aimlessly about in the trap, and been shot down to the last one of the flock. I need hardly say that would not have been their fate here under any circumstances, and on the whole I am not sorry the idea did not occur to me; for though I grieve for those two magnificent bucks, it would not have been a very satisfactory way of getting them.

Well, well; if there were any certainties in stalking, I suppose the charm would be gone, and I try to think now that they are only waiting another year for me, and their heads will be better than ever.

But I know—inside—that I shall never see them again, and never again I think shall I be so long within shot of any like them.

So it was written that our wind-up should not be a blaze of glory, though perhaps it came as near it as we deserved. Eric also finished with bad luck. He had found a herd of eleven, with two good ones among them, but they were restless and on the move the whole time; and though he several times got near, it was never quite near enough. And at last they took the alarm at something, and—like me, and Lord Ullin, and lots of other famous people—"he was left lamenting."

CHAPTER XVII

The Best of Friends Must Part

So it was good-bye to Jomund. The men and horses were here, and the canoe had already been sent over-night to the foot of the middle lake. We wept on Miss Meadows's neck—figuratively—and when she had received half a pound of tea, a whole one of rice, an empty tobacco-tin, and some needles and thread, a piece of bacon rind, and a pair of what had been anklets, but were now some threadbare holes held together by buttons, and Eric's stocking,[1] it was with difficulty that we restrained her from doing it literally on ours.

Then there were the boys; and them a few gaudy lake-trout flies, and a couple of casts apiece, made into the happiest of creatures. They came down to the Lake to see us off and shout friendly farewell greetings, and we sorrowfully started on our homeward journey.

One fact only helped to reconcile us to this vile necessity; the last onion was finished three days ago, and John has ever since gone sadly singing—

"There's nae lök about the house, there's nae lök at a'!"

The sound of the Norse word for onion affords some slight excuse for this conduct.

The most frequent complaint that one hears of Norwegian

[1] He came home without the other from shooting one day. How *can* a man lose a stocking when he is out shooting? It seems to be just as incomprehensible as the question, how the reindeer left his hind-leg on Ulva-tind; but Eric did it, and not only spent half a day looking for it, but never ceased to bemoan it.

scenery from English folk is the want of colour. I sympathise just sufficiently with this criticism to admit that I know what they mean, but the charge is unfounded. The most discontented of symphony searchers would have found enough to convert him, during the last week or two on the fjeld, and our return journey to the valley took us through a perfect blaze of gorgeous reds and yellows.

The black bearberry by itself furnishes shades of every colour, from dark myrtle green through purple browns to blood-red crimsons, and finally, if you get the sunlight through the leaves, the very brightest poppy scarlet; and this in no stinted fashion, for the bearberry often covers patches many yards in extent.

Then there is the creeping birch—"fjeld-kjarr" the natives call it (if I have caught the pronunciation properly; I have caught the pronunciation properly; I have not seen it spelt)—this has a different scale of colours, beginning with bright sap green, and running through every shade that has yellow in it to fiery orange, and at last Egyptian red; and this plant, too, nature has strewn with lavish hand.

The mountain saxifrage is more brilliant in leaf than it was in flower, and the colour a thing of itself; flaming pink comes perhaps nearest in words, but it is beyond any description of mine. Then the cloudberry, with royal purple, crimson, and marbled greens and blacks, and the great bog bilberry and blaeberry, cranberry and cowberry, with glowing reds and glossy myrtle greens, all cover huge extents of ground; and where they are there is no lack of variety.

And on higher ground, when the creeping birch and bearberry begin to leave a little room, and the rocks are trying to assert themselves, then comes the glory of moss and and lichen. Jet black is there in profusion; and bluish purple, rich dark browns, and ruddy lighter hues, and so by gradation to a group of lovely subdued tones such as no flowers or leaves can ever show. Dark and light sage, and lighter still to sea colour and pale yellow greens, and by imperceptible changes through all the more delicate tints, till

they reach pure creams, and ivories, and dead whites. And among them everywhere the black surfaces of plutonic rocks, and the glitter of mica and gleam of quartz.

No; there is no lack of colour on the fjeld, and hardly any shade, except the blues, that is not well represented. The fault of the furnishing, from the grumbler's point of view, is that though the floor is covered with this brilliant Persian carpet, there are but sombre engravings on the walls, and the ceiling is too quiet in tone; but this is only sometimes true. Maybe for a time the mountains look hard and cold and grey, and the blue of Norwegian skies is too pale to please the ardent Southerner, but one day comes a sunset that makes the stern mountains swim in a sea of molten gold, and the cold white peaks blush rosy red, and the whole world is transfigured as only a hard grey world can be. One such sight—and they are frequent enough in Norway—is worth many days of the wearisome luxuriance of softer climes.

The summer tint of the sky is, to my mind, the most lovely of all blues—the very lightest shade that can be imagined. Our English sky is often quite as pale, yet the paleness is always that of a dull film drawn over the richer hue behind. But the blue of Norway, though so faint, is absolutely pure; and seen against the snowy peak of some great mountain, the effect is wonderfully delicate and beautiful.

Our own birches round Jomund seemed to have been very evenly affected by the frosts, and nearly all of them were one colour of bright golden yellow; but above the middle lake a busier and more artistic gang of colour-fairies had been at work, and there at frequent intervals a whole tree stood glowing in a garb of brightest scarlet. These were always in rather more exposed situations than their companions, and we, rightly or wrongly, ascribe it to sudden cold attacking these unsheltered individuals a little before it was expected, while the sap was still working.

Then there was the long walk over the watershed, the rapid descent to the valley, and lo! we were back in summer again—green birches, quite large-looking green meadows, magpies strut-

ting about in the sunshine, and the ceaseless roar and rattle of the busy world, in the shape of at least three stolkjærres and a hay-cart every day, rolling past our door.

Our lightened packs and improved walking condition enabled us to do this return journey in just half the time that it took us to go up a month ago. There was only one small accident, caused by the funny little jealously which resides somewhere even in the placid Hest of Norway. These otherwise unenterprising creatures are quite content to plod serenely after an authorised leader all day, but they object entirely to be overtaken and passed by either man or beast, and any attempt to do so is regarded as a challenge to a race. One such endeavour, after a short rest, resulted in first a trot, and then a wild gallop, and a spilt pack; but luckily no harm was done; and after a little trouble the Heste were reconciled to allowing us to head the procession again as at the start.

Skip the dry details of travel, and "take it as read," that we once more found our way to the coast, and arrived at Bergen on what the good folk of that city think a very fine day; that is to say, it poured cataracts all morning, and only rained in heavy showers in the afternoon.

The *Eldorado* was due the same day, and there was an International Exhibition—no less—going on also. So we had with great prudence written for rooms in one of the hotels. Secure in this knowledge, we played about the harbour and did various little pieces of business before going to our chosen resting-place.

While thus dallying, a friendly stranger told us that a steamer would be leaving at night for Molde, our next intended haven, and this made a sudden change in our plans, for we had not expected a boat before the following day. So while John and Eric went off to book berths on the *Hakon Jarl*, Bobby and I betook ourselves to the hotel, to break to its proprietor the stupefying news that we should not want those rooms after all.

I was a little nervous about the reception he would give to this intelligence, so put on my sweetest smile, and began in honeyed accents to make a kind of sidelong apologetic approach to the

subject, intending to prepare him a little first, and let the full terror of the situation dawn upon him slowly, as it were, Bobby in the meantime being ready to run for the ambulance if it should be wanted. But the genial landlord grasped my meaning quite precipitately, and with a beaming face exclaimed, in the heartiest manner, "Ah! dat is *al*-right. I have leased your rooms two, *tree*, hour agone. I tink perhaps you not coming; and many passengers have come in English dampskib, what you call steamaire."

Altogether he was so excessively pleased with everything, and especially himself, for his great sagacity, that I had not time to feel annoyed before we were once more in the street and on our way to the harbour; and then it struck me that we were really the injured parties. But we forgave him.

Well, that is the way forethought is rewarded in Bergen; now *audi alteram partem*,[1] and see what happens to the foolish virgins who make no such prudent preparations.

We did not, as I have said, know that a steamer would be sailing for Molde to-day, and had therefore not written for berths. When John and Eric arrived at the office, they were met by the discouraging information that all the cabins were bespoken. Presently, however, it was noised abroad that so many other travellers wanted to go the same way, that there was a chance of a supplementary boat being put on; and in the course of an hour this rumour crystallised into fact, and we had the satisfaction of securing the two best state-rooms on the *Erling Jarl*.

Still better, the Norsk notion for a "supplementary" steamer was rather an Irish one, for the regular boat sailed at 11 P.M., and the *Erling Jarl* was to start with the overflow at 10.

It looked a little odd at first, but when you come to think of it, the overflow always runs out before the other contents, still more naturally before the discontents who peopled the *Hakon Jarl*.

That little trouble having adjusted itself, we set out with light hearts to admire the sights of Bergen, and soon found a charming one.

[1] "Audi alteram partem." = "Listen to the other side."

In one of the biggest streets near the Post Office, a beautiful wavy retriever was sitting with his nose in the air, and a most "engaged" expression of countenance.

Bobby is not that kind-hearted little boy whose finger was cut off by the lawn-mower, and who, when his frantic mother was desperately searching for it in the grass-box, with a view to sticking the severed member on again, informed her he had "given it to Ponto, the poor doggie looked so hungry." Still, he is on terms of affectionate intimacy with most of the brute creation, and at once crossed the road to speak to this one.

The dog got up for a moment and came to us, and said, "Ah, how do! English I see; very pleased to meet my countrymen, I assure you. Just excuse me a minute, will you? I have to catch those pigeons up there, and then I'll dance round the town with you, and show you things;" and he hurriedly sat down again and fixed his eyes steadily on the blue empyrean. Straight opposite was about the tallest house in Bergen City, and on the roof a dozen pigeons were walking up and down, bowing and cooing, in the manner affected by these fowls, and occasionally taking flight high above the chimneypots. I need hardly say they were no more likely to come down to that dog than he was to go up to hem, but his supreme confidence that it was only a question of time was quite touching.

We stayed and chatted to him for a little, but this thoughts were elsewhere, so we wandered on; he just called after us, "Come back this way and I'll give you a couple of pigeons!" and then resumed his task with the sternest resolution.

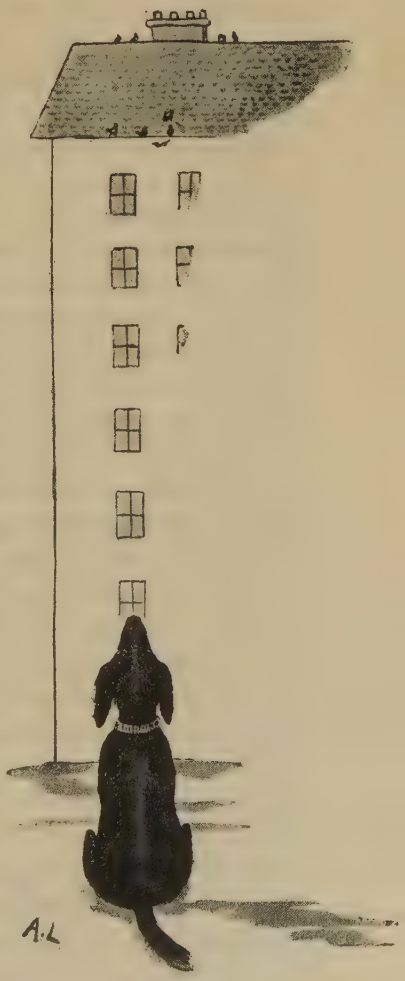
We lunched and did some shopping, and a couple of hours afterwards were again down by the Post Office. There was a small crowd of boys jeering, and in the middle sat that devoted retriever, his eyes still glued to the ridge of the opposite roof. He assured Bobby that the pigeons were "just in the very act of coming down, when up came this gang of jabbering boys, not a word of English can they speak; and of course there's no chance till they're gone, idiotic asses that they are. Look out—here he

comes!" and he suddenly made a frantic-spring forwards, as one of the pigeons walked down to the cornice and flew off.

Then the others strutted up the roof, and disappeared over the ridge, and the dog just shouted, "Wait half a second and I'll bring them," and whirled round the corner to the back of the building like a fire-engine, and we saw him no more. I sincerely trust one of those birds had a paralytic stroke within the next few hours, as some recognition of his patient faith.

The sweet simplicity with which he sat in that crowded street reminded me of an old Norfolk groom whom his master took up to London for the first time. My friend had some business at a shop in Piccadilly, and left the old man outside, thinking he would be interested by the passing carriages. But when he came out Charles was in a towering rage, and this was his trouble: "That young Will'm Higgins, sir, from our village, he write home from Lunnon and say he driv'n a hansom; and 'ere I been stand'n twenty minutes, sir, in this main street, and if he driv'n a hansome, he *must* ha' passed, sir. But Will'm Higgins allus was a dom liar, sir."

One other effect of our supplementary boat was, that we had to telegraph to a man in the Romsdal, so that he should meet us at Veb-



The perversering dog

lungsnæs a day earlier than already arranged. He lived at Lesje Værk, and there was considerable discussion at the telegraph station as to the best route to ensure speedy delivery; the message must either be carried from Dombaas, twenty-five miles by post, or from Veblungsnæs, about fifty miles, the mail-cart running each way on alternate days. They finally dicided that it ought easily to catch next morning's post from the latter place, so sent it there. This was on Thursday afternoon; and that feat accomplished, we went to dinner.

Quite a crowded and rackety table d'hôte went on, and most of us found some acquaintances, new or old. It is amusing to hear the guarded answers, not to say lies, with which people reply to questions about sporting country. On all other subjects English folk in this land are disposed to be friendly and agreeable, but ask a man who has a pile of rod-boxes and gun-cases out in the hall where he is going, and it is odds he either "appears to take no notice," or else replies with great apparent candour: "Well, fact is I didn't catch the name of the place—one of those Norwegian names, y' know, like dal something or other; it's right away up South, at the back of beyond, y' know, between Trondhjem and Stavanger and Röros, in one of their blessed Amts. My pal knows all about it, when I meet him."

It is really remarkable what a singularly large number of otherwise intelligent Britons are annually deposited in these foreign parts without knowing the name of the place they are going to. And yet they never seem to be wandering about without any visible means of subsistence. Some merciful Providence evidently watches over them, and perhaps their memory for names comes back after the excitement of talking to their fellow-creatures has subsided.

The only working agreement by which trouble can be avoided is to rigidly taboo any such questions at all; and the old Anglo-Norwegians always adhere to this rule, and generally get on well together.

One such I had at dinner. But the lady on my other side was

a little trying, from an impression which she seemed to have that the meanings of words are getting too stereotyped, and that it is better to vary their significance from time to time without warning. Among other things she asked if I knew "that lovely yellow rose called John Henry Williamson." I did not, but mentioned another good one named William Allan Richardson. She arched her eyebrows, and said that was the one she was talking about!

I remember a girl coming up into our stone-wall country for the first time. She looked round, and exclaimed in wild surprise, "Why these hedges are all made of bricks!" This kind of statement makes one's brain whirl.

My other dinner neighbour had a story which was new to me (if it has been printed, I apologise). The lessee of a Devonshire shooting manor asked his keeper, "Who was the tenant of the adjoining estate?" and was told "They du say he be a passon as keeps a boys' skule near Lunnon." It was Dr. Warre! The man over in Montana who advised me to look at a "waterfall in one of the Eastern States, at a place called Niagara," is the nearest parallel to this Devonian.

Bobby seemed to have had a more interesting meal than any of us. He had gathered that the stranger next to him was a "Hibsenist"—that is what he *said*—and was perfectly enchanted; we could not imagine why. Cross-examination cleared up the mystery; he thought a "Hibsenist" was something between a hypnotist and a dipsomaniac, both of which products of science he was longing to meet. John tried to enlighten him on the subject of the Master Builder, but he only replied, "Oh, Peter Ibbetson? Oh yes, I began to read *him*; at least I looked at the pictures." I fear the Master has lost another promising pupil.

My "old Norwegian" took us off to coffee in a pleasant place under trees—I forget its name—and the evening slipped away so smoothly that we dismissed the Supplementary Boat from our minds until it was almost time for us to be on board. If there is still any excitement in Bergen City as to why those five mad Englishmen ran that frantic race down Strandgade, and made the

ramparts rock by their distraught bellowings for a boat to take them over the Vaagen, those were we (or should it be "them was us"?).

Our Supplementary Jarl started with great punctuality at ten, and by breakfast-time next day was tossing—but not very intolerably—in the swell of the dreaded headland of Statt, supposed to be about the roughest place on the whole west coast. Except for this one open length of two or three hours, our course lay "indenskjærs," and was entirely protected from any unpleasant behaviour of the sea by the constant succession of rock-bound islands.

Wonderful sea-wall of Norway! What sights those stern grey cliffs have gazed upon! Dimly one looks back to near a thousand years ago, when this rocky headland of Statt was ringing with battle-cries and the clang of armour, in the great sea-fight that first taught the Vikings of long since vanished Jomsburg to know defeat. Then hear those puny sounds, noise of heroes though they were, overwhelmed by the roar of heaven's artillery; and see the knife of Hakon the Wicked, flickering ghastly in the fitful blaze of lightning, as he slew his youngest son, and dearly purchased victory for that time. Down this southern fjord reeled the shattered remnants of the pirate fleet; and here, under the cape itself, sank the great chests filled with the gold of gallant Bue, flung overboard when the fight was lost; and round them still lie perhaps the bones of that stubborn old sea-thief and his crew, where they leapt after their treasure into the deep.

Past these great ramparts of the North have sailed all the men whose children rule the world to-day; for it is not Cæsar, nor Alexander, nor Pharaoh, whose descendants have girdled the globe, but Knut and Harald, and Olaf Tryggvesson and the Saint, whose blood runs strongest in the living nations—whose ships are on every sea, and whose flag waves in every fastness of the earth.

And who shall say what changing wonders these mighty rocks shall endure to see? Scientific experts agree that it is impossible,

and this emboldens one to prophesy that it is inevitable, that one day the stupendous wealth of water in the heights of Norway will become the Power of Europe; and even when that is obsolete, and the revolution of the globe is harnessed to our work, these cliffs may still be safely recommended as a good firm bed for the bearings of the necessary machinery.

The coast scenery is rather monotonous, but at intervals there were beautiful views of cloudcapped mountains with the snow-wreaths stretching far down their black and rugged sides; and we did a little spying for our long-lost but ever dear rens, though without success.

The *Erling Jarl* was not only supplementary—he was also express; that is to say, he left "Brer Hakon" to call at the intermediate ports according to programme, while he in the haughtiest manner visited only Aalesund, a rather picturesque town among an intricate jumble of fjords and islands; and by four o'clock we were landed at Molde.

I suppose there is no Norwegian resort better known to English people. so will not attempt any description of this little place. Suffice it to say we think it deserves the good reputation it has gained for beauty of situation, and we found the Grand Hotel extremely comfortable.

We tried before dinner to climb to the top of the hill behind the town, but after struggling gallantly with it for an hour or two, in which time we had ascended nearly two hundred feet, and eaten quite two million blueberries, we gave it up; and Eric's aneroid salved our conscience by indicating that it was at least three miles high. That invaluable instrument has been perfecting itself in the art of embroidery for the last month, and can work miracles in comparison with its originally modest performances.

After dinner Eric and Bobby stole a pram, and went to play on the other side of the fjord, while John and I stayed on the pier and listened to the strains of "Dysy," who has, in her old age, safely braved the perils of the North Sea passage, and was disporting herself in front of the hotel.

When the welkin was not ringing with the "loud bassoon" it was an extraordinarily still evening; so calm and motionless were both air and water, that from the bottom steps of the pier I spoke to the Viking pair right across the fjord. They were only a dim black spot on the water under the long island bank, and I used about as much violence as a Common Law barrister addressing a meek and sleepy judge. They heard distinctly; and their answer came perfectly clear over the wide reach of waters, but very small, like the ghostly voices that live in a telephone.

We turned in at eleven, just as the poor *Hakon Jarl* arrived with the Wise Virgins. It will, we hope, teach them not to be so previous and grasping in booking berths for the future.

Gay goings on with the baths next morning. There are a whole cellarful of these rather unusual adjuncts to a Norse inn; and at ten o'clock we started for the last stage of our sea voyage to Veblungsnæs. The porters looked at our baggage, and decided it would be a great deal easier to take Mahoment to the mountain than the reverse operation; so the steamer was brought from her regular pier, and embarked all our belongings at the hotel.

I sincerely hope we have never cheated any one during our wanderings; but an absent-minded man would be almost certain to do it, sooner or later, as very little trouble seems to be taken at hotels or on steamers to beat up all the occupants and make them pay. I suppose the native's honesty would always cause him to take the trouble of finding out the proper recipient for his money, and it is satisfactory to know that the English reputation for fair dealing stands equally high; perhaps not unnaturally, for our predatory classes would find a poor field for their efforts out here.

It is very seldom that any of us are asked for tickets, or fares, or any other unpleasant necessities, but when we are, we simply refer the applicant to "the other Englishman," and probably in time they arrive at John, who is only too delighted at any time to present any one with a pocketful of ten-öre pieces (chiefly belonging to Eric and me). Anyhow I wash my hands of it.

So different it all is from the distrustful behaviour of the self-

satisfied Continent. Why, I knew a lady whose husband went on the top of a tramcar in Paris, and when the conductor came inside for the fares, she said, *"Monsieur est en haut; il vous payera,"* and the man treated her with contumely, under the impression that she was proffering a religious sentiment in lieu of cash. A Norseman would have taken off his hat, and if he could not find "Monsieur," I do not think it would have occured to him that "Madame" could possibly be intending to defraud him.

The Molde and Veblungsnæs steamer was a quaint little craft, and rather crowded, but, like all the fjord boats, very neat and clean; and though the food was not elaborate—and it was somewhat of a struggle to get it—it was all good.

And so at "half-three" on Saturday afternoon, we carried the canoe safe ashore at the mouth of the Rauma River, in a most miserable downpour of west-coast rain.

CHAPTER XVIII

Up the Road

We had intended to drive straight away from Veblungsnæs and get a stage or two up the Romsdal before evening, but the rain was much too disheartening, and those good intentions went for paving-stones. Moreover, the man and cart, which we hoped our telegram from Bergen would have brought to meet us, had not turned up; and altogether we were not sorry to get under cover into the unpretentious but very comfortable little Romsdal Hotel, and wait for a change in the weather.

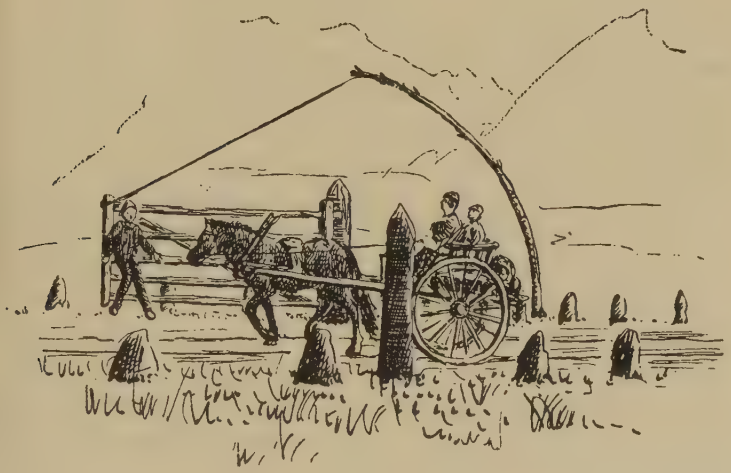
It occured to us that perhaps the telegram had got itself into trouble somehow, so we hunted up the Post Office and inquired. A dear old lady, who was apparently in command, at once produced it from a number of other papers, and explained that it had just missed the southern post yesterday; but that it would go without fail on Monday (this was Saturday), "unless," she naively added, "you are going on that way earlier, and would like to take it yourself."

We thought not; it was a good race, and we would play fair, and see who won in the end. The telegram had six hours start, but we had caught it up, and now it was neck and neck; and we backed ourselves.

Then we went to the telegraph office (the two services are distinct in Norway), and the official there was as obliging as all officials in this country are, which is saying much. He wired to quite a number of stations up and down the road, to see if they happened to know of any one going past our destination—Lesje Værk—

and altogether took trouble enough to have cost us innumerable kroner; but all for nothing, and also to no effect.

These two episodes exhausted the resources of Veblungsnæs, so we supped, and played the banjo, and sang, until the crowd in the street looked menacing—then went to bed.



A self-closing gate

We gathered from the day-book that the ascent of the Romsdalshorn can be made in just twelve hours, there and back, from Veblungsnæs. It seems a good performance.

Sunday opened with such a promising look of fine weather, that we felt obliged (time being rather a serious matter to us now) to get as far up the valley as we could. So stolkjærres[1] for ourselves, and a luxurious kind of long two-wheeled barouche for the canoe —they used it at other times for hay—were brought round, and in a time, and half a time, and times, we got away.

The rain had washed the atmosphere into an unusual state of clearness for the west coast, and the Romsdalshorn shone out a

[1] Stolkjærre = two-wheeled cart with seats.

clear-cut black and white, with a sprinkling of new snow; while across the dale the weird Witch-hills showed every line of their fantastic crags and pinnacles, without a wisp of cloud. It was as perfect a day for the drive as we could have dreamt of, and the lovely valley, with the broad reaches and salmon pools of the Rauma and fir-clad slopes above, never looked more beautiful.

But the Romsdal has been described before, and though it will bear looking at as often as you please, it is possible to read about it too much; so the unlearned reader is referred to writers who are better able to convey their impressions of the grand dale.

Notice, however, which perhaps the enthusiasts do not, the arrangement for closing gates across the high-road. A tall slim fir pole, like a fishing-rod, is fixed upright at the side, and from its top a rope is fastened to the gate. The spring of the rod is sufficient to bring the gate to its place after opening, without any of the uncertainty which generally marks the efforts of the patent contrivances one sees in England.

The road was very muddy indeed, about as muddy as a road could be without forfeiting its right to be called one. Down through this Slough of Despond came wallowing, soon after our start, an indignant man on a bicycle. The ubiquitous wheel is common enough in these far-off regions now, and even the Norseman has given up Viking and taken to biking. But this was an Englishman —and furious; he turned upon us as if we were the Parish Council, and said, "Why, I tell you it's positively *dusty* up at Stueflaaten."

And before we had time to knock him off the machine, he had disappeared—whelmed in a rut, Eric said—and we saw him no more.

Somebody remarked meditatively, "By George, I wish we had had time to ask that fellow about the fishing up there; we should have heard surprising things. He's what the poet Cowper calls 'a sweet but awful lyre.'" But he would have been wasted as a mere teller of fish stories; what he was designed for was obviously company-promoting, and standing for Parliament as a carpet-bagger.

Strangely enough, however, the road did presently begin to get a little less muddy, and by the time we were 1000 feet up it was really dry; and—wonder of wonders!—at Stueflaaten, which we reached just as the big bell was clanging for supper, the fairy tale was proved to be true, for the road was deep in dust, and had evidently seen no rain for days.

So we put a penny in the Missionary box for false accusations, and apologised to the bicycle man.

That bell reminds me of the rather quaint practice of the Molde hotel, the only place I have seen it in Norway, though it is not so unusual on the Continent. At meal-times the bell-man perambulates the passages, ringing for all he is worth, "upstairs and downstairs," and, for aught I know, "in my lady's chamber." No one in that hotel can excuse lateness for meals by the old plea, "I did not hear the bell," for in all these wooden houses, sound of even feeble sorts, such as a hornpipe in shooting-boots, or John sneezing, makes timid people think the roof is falling in; and when a huge bell is savagely rung in every inch of it, the whole building hums and vibrates like a sounding-board.

Stueflaaten is one of the best-known places on the beaten paths of touristdom, and it deserves all the praise that has been meted out to it. The station is beautifully situated a few score yards from the river, which itself is an ideal stream in appearance, though as trouting water it is, I believe, not worth much. The food is good, with just a slight tendency towards pretentiousness, which, let us hope, will go no further; it is of course the fault of the Public—chiefly British—which generally succeeds in spoiling sooner or later every nice place that comes under its baneful influence, by reducing them all to a dead level of spurious Spiers-and-Pondism. Charges reasonable; rooms clean—but that is universal in this part of the country, even in the humblest sæter. The smoking-room fireplace is a beautiful specimen of the old-time open corner hearth, and when after supper the big logs are kicked up into a blaze, life looks very enjoyable there.

Round this fire the sojourners in the two big buildings into which

the station has now grown congregate nightly after supper, for improving conversation, and athletic competitions of the chalk line and bottle-cork, tongs and lucifer match order. And here I overheard some invaluable hints for the solving of that great perennial difficulty, "How to Make a Billiard-Room Comfortable."

"Really comfortable chairs," one man was saying; "great big lounging cushions, y' know."

"Yes, that's right," the other assented. "And then they ought to have one of those little swing-table dodges on the arm, with room for a whisky and soda and a book."

"Then of course the lighting is a great point. I rather like those low electric lamps, with a plug in the wall, y' know."

"And the fireplace is very important. You can't beat one like this; if people would only put them into English houses; but any way, a good wood-burning hearth of sorts."

"No; there's nothing like them. Then a nice little table near each side of the fire, to hold newspapers and so on."

"And smokes. Must have plenty of good ones handy."

"Yes, I think that's about all you want. Oh!—and then there's the billiard-table."

"Ye—es, I should put that in another room."

There was another snatch of conversation which rather pleased me. A small domestic party of nice old lady and rather prim young man and his sister, had apparently picked up in their travels a horsy individual, who had just announced his intention of visiting the great fair—I forget its name—near Lillehammer, and was assuring the prim youth that he likewise ought to go, as there were splendid bargains in horseflesh to be picked up. And the old lady piteously exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Smith, *don't* make my son into a scoundrel—*too!*"

I cannot imagine why Mr. Smith came to Norway. He was an agreeable young man, but cared for nothing, as far as we could detect, except horses and fox-terriers; and this country does not shine in either of those productions. He was full of woe at this time, because, as he confided to me, he had lost £150 on a terrier.

I sympathised with him at first, supposing he had paid that sum for the dog, and that it had incontinently died; but when I learnt that he had sold the animal for £50, and was sorrowing because he had just heard that the purchaser had resold it for £200, my pity was transferred to its usual object—self. Yet his unhappiness was as real as if that £150 had dropped out of his pocket, and been swallowed up in the depths of Rauma River.

We were rather restricted to the conversation of others on this first night, inasmuch as a ring fence was formed round the fire by a large party of English who had been staying at this station for some time, and, with that genial courtesy which makes some of us so beloved by other nations, apparently thought that this gave them the right to exclude all later comers from any participation in the comforts of the smoking-room—the Family Circle, John called them. Do you know the story, by the way, of the man who proposed "the health of Mr. and Mrs. Dash and the Family Circle"? And the eldest daughter burst into tears, and said, "She might be more than eighteen inches in the waist, but he was no gentleman to allude to it like that."

However, the Family Circle were not actively hostile; they only ignored us. I remember a Family Circle once—*cujus pars minima fui*[1]—in a little inn on the west coast of Ireland, where we treated an inoffensive stranger much worse. He was a virtuous and respectable old commercial traveller, and what he expected to sell in that haunt of salmon, grouse, and illicit stills I do not know. But he had his dinner at six, and we had ours about eight; and the old man was rather a Banquo's ghost at the feast, for he *would* sit in an arm-chair by the fire and "keep on sayin' nuffin'," which was distressing to a gang of people who were all saying so much. Near the foot of the table, with its back to this arm-chair, was the post of Dishonour, always occupied by the latest arrival—at this time an eminent Q.C.—and the duty attached to it was a perpetual liability to ring the bell whenever we wanted anything; whereupon Maggie usually brought in more whisky, without regard to the

[1] "Cujus pars minima fui." = "In which I played a minor part."

period at which dinner might have arrived. Banquo sat peacefully through half dinner, and we were very polite to him. Then he went out—which the Q.C. saw—and came in again, in a pair of slippers; and *that* he neither saw nor heard. Presently the bell was wanted, and that ornament of Her Majesty's High Courts struck, said he had done nothing but ring all night; it was someone else's turn. "Why on earth," he wanted to know in that commanding tone which has carried conviction to so many British Juries, "that stupid old fossil by the fire doesn't make himself useful I cannot imagine. He certainly isn't ornamental." (Here followed certain extremely pertinent personal remarks; "idiotic dodderer" was about the least embarrassing epithet that occured. Suffice it to say that the wealth of imagery displayed was worthy of the best traditions of the English Bar.)

An awe-struck silence fell upon the assembly, every man of whom (except the speaker) was perfectly aware of the presence, within three feet, of the unfortunate object of this burlesque abuse. Then the terrible truth suddenly dawned upon him also, and someone piped up with a remark about the weather, and got withered, and the poor old traveller fled—it was asserted that he did not stop to change his slippers—to the town, twenty-eight miles away across the moor, no doubt thanking Heaven for his merciful escape from a desperate gang of bloodthirsty Fenians; and a volunteer was installed in the Siege Perilous, *vice* Q.C. resigned.

Undoubtedly John was right when he quoted as an ancient proverb that "it is luckier to be born selfish than rich." But the Family Circle went away next morning, and we proceeded to take all the fire seats ourselves.

We lingered another day to try one or two of the tributary streams which hereabouts join the Rauma, and this resolve cost us the race with our telegram. That speedy missive—despatched from Bergen on Thursday afternoon—went past Stueflaaten, with a triumphant blowing of posthorns, on Monday morning; and we never afterwards overtook it.

The canoe, with the plodding perseverance that we used (until

Brer Tarrypin came on the scene) to associate with the tortoise, went forward on Sunday night, with instructions to stop at Mölmen, the station on the Divide.

The Ulvedal stream afforded poor sport—two or three half-pound fish—but we spent a delightful day roaming about in the woods and glens on the south side of the Rauma; and Eric seized the opportunity to rush up another mountain, from the top of which most of Norway was visible.

Coming down the Ulva glen towards evening, we thought it would be a noble act to leave the most remote sæter the contents of the creel—it was not a very lordly gift—so sent in Bobby, who can speak no Norwegian and very little English, to offer the tribute. He came out presently, and told us that the sætermand had received them most gratefully, and thanked him with extreme warmth. Our belief, however, is that Bobby merely opened the door of an empty room, cast those fishes on to the floor, and fled, concocting the vain imaginings with which he sought to beguile us.

Outside while we waited for him, we were presently aware of a juvenile Siskin, perched upon a harrow, in the centre of what one might call the farmyard. There were many of these small fowl about the sæter, all very tame, but for sheer audacious effrontery I never saw any creature, not even a London Arab, to equal him of the harrow. He just sat there, surrounded by us three, and chatted away on things in general with the most unruffled equanimity, though none of us were a yard from him. Soon, however, there was a movement on the fence hard by, and a shrill voice (his mother's) was heard calling for "Pe—eter." Peter "appeared to take no notice" for a little time, but his venerable parent was insistent, and at last young Hopeful shrugged his shoulders, twittered out, "So long, you fellows," and flew off to her.

It is a curious fact that many of these creatures near the coast seem to talk English; there was the dog at Bergen, and another one later on at Lesje Værk, and now this Siskin. As we went away he was sitting on the fence down the track, in the midst of an admiring crowd, and I heard him saying, "It's all tommy-rot (he

was a vulgar little bird) what the Guv'nor says about the villainy of these so-called human beings; they're not half a bad sort when you get to *know* them, you know. I was talking to three of them that I chummed up with to-day, and I can tell you they were very sensible well-meaning chaps, who could appreciate a bit of superior intelligence when they met it as well as any one, but of course the poor old Guv'nor——" We were in a hurry for dinner, and did not hear the rest, and that was the last we saw of the Affable Siskin, whose memory we fondly cherish.

Stueeflaaten was left behind with true regret; possibly earlier in the year it might be worth while to stay there for fishing, but apart from sport, I know no more attractive spot in Norway. The next station, Mölmen, has not equal beauty of situation, but it is well managed and comfortable, and there is the lake fishing for those who like it. The trouting in the Rauma there had also a good reputation, but I believe some alternation has been made in the outfall from the lake, which has interfered with the fishing considerably.

At Mölmen we found the canoe, reposing safely after all its wanderings. In another quarter of an hour it was launched on the Lake of Lesjeskogen, and our great enterprise, "The Circumnavigation of Norway;" had fairly begun.

This undertaking perhaps needs some explanation, so the reader will kindly take a map, and—bearing in mind the teachings of "Somebody's Scientific Dialogues" that "an island is a piece of land surrounded by water"—observe: that the Rauma runs into the sea at Veblungsnæs; and I suppose it will be admitted that there is no solution of continuity between its outflow and its source. This source is at the western end of Lesje Lake, on which our canoe was now floating, and from the eastern end runs out the Logen, which joins the Glommen, and is poured into the sea east of Christiania. Therefore the whole of the land south and west of these two rivers is an island; and as it contains all the big towns, except Throndhjem, it is not unreasonable to call it Norway.

Our circumnavigation had not been quite strictly carried out, as

time did not permit us to pole and paddle all the way up the Rauma, though we came as near the real thing as most people do who bicycle round the world or swim across the Channel. But, anyhow, we did this length of it fairly. The lake is about seven miles long, and we were nearly exhausted when we arrived at the other end, for a woeful wind blew against us, and the rain poured upon us; and whenever we made twenty yards forward, Bobby, who was trailing a minnow, was sure to hook a trout, and in the trouble of landing it we drifted thirty back. At last, finding we were still only at the start, we sternly forbade any more fishing; and with all hands at the paddles, we did eventually reach Lesje Værk, and took shelter under the hospitable weather-cocked roof of the station.

The old iron-works from which the place is named (Lesje Jern-værk in full) are long since defunct, and even the ruins are fast disappearing. I imagine the quaint vanes (one of which adorns the title-page) are relics from the wreck. The lion of Norway and date 1734, in iron fretwork, are picturesque reminders of the vanished enterprise.

Another self-closing gate

CHAPTER XIX

Down the Road

There are many worse places at which to spend a little time than the station at Lesje Værk. It is not large, and everything is very unpretentious, but clean and neat; the food good, and the people of the house kindness itself. The only serious drawbacks are the cheerless tall iron stoves in the guest rooms; but I live in hope that some day the sensible Norseman will revert to the ancient and admirable corner hearth.

The lake is a beautiful sheet of water, somewhat after the fashion of Grasmere; for the most part shallow, and with a multitude of pretty bays, and rocky islands and capes between them. Some of these bays are thickly filled with rushes, in the thinner parts of which lurk some of the fattest trout, while in the denser growth ducks and other water-fowl find all they like for a dwelling place. The shores are of dry stony soil, covered with berry-bearing plants, and above them for the first few hundred feet with dark green pines, and higher with the brilliant foliage of the birch, while from lingering snow-wreaths on the heights around the foaming torrents leap down to join the waters of the lake.

There are many birds in these woods, compared at least with the numbers on the fjeld. Black game fly to and fro across the lake; and in the heart of the forest, if you go quietly (and unless you go quietly, why go at all?), you may see the great black Woodpecker at work, or his spotted cousin, the little Gertrude-bird, who will be undisturbed by any noise you may choose to make. And

among others of the possible distinguished strangers whom you seldom meet at home, there is the Pine Grosbeak, and the Crossbill, and great Butcher-bird. Or in some open glade you may chance on a wicked Goshawk murdering an unlucky ryper or hazel-hen. And everywhere the bright-eyed Stoat, more fearless even than in England, flashes across your path, and turns with insatiable curiosity before he is lost again in the cover. And the squirrels chatter in the trees; or perhaps you may be lucky enough to see a Pine Marten—now almost vanished from our own country. Probably King Capercaillie is here, or hereabouts, also. I have seen him in considerable numbers not very far away, though we were not admitted to his presence at Lesje.

But I did meet in the birch woods a curious thing that looked like a mottled rag, or shredded piece of birch bark, hanging without movement in the branches of a tree about eight feet from the ground. I stole upon him as the minions of the Law stole upon the "Woild Man," but it was not until a bare ten yards separated us, that the thing could be made out as a Long-eared Owl, fast asleep and dreaming. I crept closer still, and could have touched it with my stick, when the creature suddenly opened a huge pair of round eyes, and the limply hanging rag was transformed into a silent bird, that "up and away wid him" on moth-like wings, and vanished swiftly into the forest depths.

The cream of the trout-fishing was long since skimmed. Norwegian trout are earlier than English, and already before we left Nord Vand on 10th September, many of the female fish were heavy in spawn, and the haughty hooked jaw of their lords was beginning to be noticeable. But Lesje has another resource in the grayling, now just arrived at good condition, though perhaps not quite at the best. We did not catch any big ones—nothing over a pound—but no doubt there are all sizes up to two or three.

From the number of rises that we saw at certain exceptional times, I should think that the fishing at the right season, say in July, would be something like the best Sutherland Lochs for weight; and the numbers perhaps still more satisfactory. The taking

might even be furious; and I should not recommend you to lend your fly-book to the young and ardent angler whom you launch upon the lake. A friend of mine did this once to two beginners on a loch in Donegal. It chanced on a day when the trout were rising—they ran about three or four to the pound—and each fisherman had, to begin with, three flies on his cast. But when in their frantic eagerness they began to strike flies off, and their trembling fingers could not uncoil the neat half-dozens of new ones with sufficient rapidity, they simply hauled at a fly (any sort was right just then) out of the book as far as it would come, and bit it off. At the end of the day they had 150 trout, and, according to the keeper, had lost about 3000.

And the fly book was a sight for the British Museum.

It was admitted by everybody that it would be ridiculous to even try to disentangle anything out of it, and they most cheerfully bade my friend rig himself out afresh and send the bill to them. Even after paying it, they declared the day was worth double the money.

It was far too late for any fortune of this kind, but nevertheless we had good fun one or two evenings in watching Bobby and the eager grayling. It was his first introduction to this fish, and their mutual anxiety to meet had no tangible results for a long time, until he began to understand their peculiar manners and customs a little.

Nobody's reputation advanced very much; but after all, what is a reputation? A thing obtained by luck, and retained by force and fraud; or to be more precise, secured by a fortunate afternoon with fly, and supported by worms, minnows, snatching, and dynamite. I speak only of a fishing reputation, never having had any other kind, and—*bien entendu*—these remarks only apply to a good reputation; a bad one can be acquired quite easily by merely deserving it, or even without that little trouble.

At the same time I do not think the fisherman himself is always the most to blame for the marvels that are perpetrated in his name. The fact is, there is an old-world surviving tendency in all mankind,

dating from prehistoric times, to weave a magic veil of wonders round the subject of anything that lives, or is supposed to live, in the vasty and mysterious deep. I am certain that before Shem had successfully gaffed a half-grown codfish from the bows of the Ark, Ham and Japheth were up on the poop asking Noah if he had seen "the huge Megalosaurus that Shemmy and the Mammoth had just landed."

Long, long years ago, two of us went fishing in a certain dry-fly river, and seeing some beautiful sea-trout in the big town we started from, we bought a couple of two-lb. fish as a little present for our hostess. Well, the wind and the water, and sun and flies, and various other things, went wrong—you know how they do—and we cought no fish, and then the Devil persuaded us to pretend we had lured those sea-trout. They were solemnly weighed, and no such fish had ever been seen in that river before; and as there was no expert to show us up, the joke passed undetected.

The first artificer in the fish stories

A week or two afterwards we told the facts, but, to our horror, it was absolutely useless, not a soul would believe us—they only thought we were lying, with some occult design of preventing any one else from catching such fish; and though we have solemnly asserted the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth ever since, it has not the slightest effect. Only last year, the most successful fisherman on the river was heard talking enviously about "those two splendid baskets of three pounders" that we captured long ago.

There was the best selection of Norwegian bread at Lesje that we have yet seen—deliciously crisp and flaky "fladbrod," of the usual kind, but particularly well made; and in addition two other sorts, one of them almost like shortbread, though not thicker than the back of this book, name unknown, but believed to be something like "rume-brod." The other is called "skrive-brod," from the peculiar device of lines (conventionalised Runic?) with which it is adorned, a very curious and characteristic product. Several other interesting and palatable dishes graced our table here, and altogether Lesje Værk is about the most unspoilt Norwegian place that can be easily reached by the tourist in these hurrying days.

We had at last to bid "farvel" to these nice people, not forgetting sweet little Marie and Marit, and two jolly little round boys, and Baias, the rollicking blackfaced pup, who talked English better than any one else in the place, and had sworn eternal friendship with Bobby. Once more on a Sunday we took to the road in a couple of stolkjærres, the canoe having gone down ahead of us on a hay-cart.

The Circumnavigation had again been rudely interrupted here by a variety of untoward circumstances, one being the refusal of the crew to tear themselves away from peaceful delights and fleshpots, until the time had grown very short.

But perhaps a more important one was the physical geography of the place. Our *Amtskart,* was twenty years old, and things have been considerably altered since it was published. For instance, the church marked at the eastern end of Lesjeskogen Vand no longer stands there, but has been removed bodily; I believe to the western end, near Mölmen.

This was very bewildering when we first were finding our way down the lake in the canoe, for of course a church in Norway is a most conspicuous landmark.

There was a building close to the station which John persisted in calling a church, his argument (delivered in a scornful voice) being that he had never seen a barn with a steeple and a peal of bells. My argument (propounded with an unpleasant sneer) was

that I had never seen a church with a loaded hay-cart sticking out of one of the clerestory windows. Either all the churches in the district look like barns, or all the barns look like churches; and I think the latter hypothesis is correct.

Another vast alteration in the state of things set down in the old *Amtskart,* has been caused by interference with the flow of water down from the lake, and the complete draining of the big lake below Holsæt Station, marked in the map as Læsø Vand. The old site of this lake is now occupied by flat alluvial deposit, which is in process of conversion into fields, and will probably be good land, while through the middle an attenuated stream winds its devious way.

The most noteworthy sights during our day's drive were the remarkably good (and beautiful) buildings which are being erected at several places along the road for school-houses. Norway at any rate seems to spare no expense in this direction, in spite of her poverty.

At this time of year there was so little water going down the Logen, and so many stones and obstructions in its course, that we decided it was not worth while to trouble ourselves with so-called canoeing; there would be more carrying, and dragging, and scraping than paddling, so we drove gaily down the road as far as Dombaas.

The dryness of this district is rather extraordinary, considering its great height (about two thousand feet) and situation among big mountains. I believe the rainfall is not quite fifteen inches, as against seventy-two at Bergen. The result is that agriculture is only carried on by lavish irrigation, the water being led from the numerous snow-fed torrents in wooden troughs made of the hollowed-out halves of pine trees; and these useful little aqueducts cross the road, overhead or under foot, and ramble about the fields, in every direction.

The river, though small, is extremely pretty, and if we had had a few more days at our disposal, we should certainly have tried the voyage, which, as far as I can judge, is practicable to a properly

managed canoe, down to an English mile or so below Brændhougen. But there are of course many places in this run which would have to be portaged, and perhaps the game would not be worth the candle. I think there would be very fair fishing—possibly not big fish, but plenty of them; at any rate we found the river acting up to this description for a few miles below Lesje Værk. And there were many very ducky and snipy-looking places.

We fared sumptuously for lunch at Dombaas, where the Throndhjem road comes switchbacking down from the North to join ours. I forget how many courses of sweets (all good) were set before us, but can confidently affirm there were at least three more than any one ought to eat. Yet we wrestled with them all, and came out victorious.

At the next station, Tofte Moen, everything looked so comfortable, and—well, that lunch, and one thing and another, decided us to go no farthèr. Here we had news of an ancient friend, Ivar Tofte of Bjölstad, and were delighted to hear that the old man is still alive, and, as the Skald would say, "going strong." He is some relation to the owner of Tofte Moen, both of them claiming an unbroken pedigree from Harald Fairhair.

Tofte Moen itself is a fine old gaard, with spacious rooms and great fireplaces, and an air of genial open housekeeping about it, though it has not the old-world beauty of Bjölstad in Hedalen.

If you ever go there, look in the quaint barbarian chest under the window at the head of the first stairs, and you will find more cakes of sorts than you ever dreamt of. I did not steal any myself, but I saw the "pige" filling a huge basket out of it, and looked in. There appeared to be about three-quarters of a ton, at a modest computation, and very seductive cakes too.

Once more a little driving, and we were at the grand pass of Rusten, an impossible place for voyaging purposes, but a splendid eight or nine miles of scenery—bad to beat anywhere, and perhaps equal to anything in Norway; and at last we overtook the canoe and heavy baggage at Laurgaard, below the precipitous gorge through which the Logen has carved its headlong way.

This was practically the end of our road-work, and we were lucky enough to reach it without the spill which sooner or later befalls the driver along Norwegian roads.

One's first experience of carriole and stolkjærre is rather fascinating. They are really comfortable little vehicles, and the horse and harness are quaint, and the road pretty and good; and altogether one sets out in a pleased and attentive frame of mind, and grips the reins with a clear determination to do one's duty, and drive the pony along at a nice trot—not *too* fast, of course, but just briskly—and guide him into the best parts of the road.

Presently you find that there is no whip, and without one the Hest will not presume to move faster than five miles an hour exactly; and if you address English expletives to him, he affects to misunderstand them for orders to stop. Perhaps for a stage or two you get out and cut a stick to beat him withal, and you still keep up the farce of trying to direct him in the way; the result being that only his strong common-sense keeps you from a smash, for trying to pass a cart on the English side instead of the Norwegian.

After a score of miles you are certain to give up interest in a concern where all the management is taken out of your hands, and not improbably you become a sleeping, or at least a dreaming, partner. And then at some perfectly unnecessary place, the Hest, who is also asleep. wakes up on his head, where you and your portmanteau are likewise peacefully reposing. And —at least this is what happened to me once in a stolkjærre—you hear the treacherous friend who has been tipped out by your side wrathfully replying to the inquiry "Who was driving?" "Driving? No one was *driving;* but Jim had hold of the reins!"

Well, we had escaped the perils by land, and now began the perils by water. The canoe was launched just above Laurgaard bridge, and Eric, Bobby, and I manned her for the first run to Otta, ten miles down the road, John driving on to the same place with most of the luggage.

There was a brisk little rapid just below the bridge, and another

a short distance lower down, and after that the river settled into a smooth and uneventful current, very much after the fashion of our sober Thames. Trout were rising all along, and fishing-nets hanging up to dry at a few places, but we saw nothing that looked big. I believe the Logen River is not worth much to the angler, though in those places where it widens out into lakes it holds not only fine trout and grayling, but also gwyniad and the curious burbot—Pliny's "weasel-fish"— whose liver Lucullus evidently never heard of.

This flat and otherwise rather uninteresting length passed trough some duck-haunted marshes, and every now and then a flight of teal whistled overhead, or the quiet croaking of a merganser was heard, as we swung round a corner into a family of these birds, paddling hurriedly into a sheltered backwater.

Then the pace began to increase again, and presently we were careering along at a noble speed, the Logen here exactly the pleasantest size of river for canoeing; and we did the last three miles in such good time that we almost passed Otta "unbeknownst".

Luckily Eric looked out of the river for a moment, my attention being occupied in keeping the canoe in the right place, and was suddenly aware of a railway train—unwonted sight—and a gay hotel, with flags bravely fluttering in the breeze.

It had taken us just an hour and three-quarters to run this length—probably about twelve miles of river—and as two-thirds of it was very slow, the remaining third was pretty fast. John with his ten miles of road beat us by a few minutes.

We had no intention of doing anything arduous or uncomfortable on this canoe trip. Gudbrandsdal is no more a wild place than the Thames Valley, and its stations are much more comfortable than most of our riverside inns. So here we landed to lunch and send nearly all our baggage by train to Christiania, keeping only the fishing-rods and a change of clothes.

CHAPTER XX

Down the River

No," John was heard to remark meditatively, after the wreck, "there's nothing mean about Jim. A man who throws away ten pounds' worth of good canoe, partly belonging to me, to make about three-ha'porth of sorry jest, can't be accused of not doing things in proper style."

Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ?[1] Jealousy, you know—mere jealousy. Besides, that is another story; at present we have to consider the Social and Political Aspects of the Railroad in Gudbrandsdal.

The valley is greatly changed since I first came up it in '78; and, trying hard to be unprejudiced, I cannot think it improved. In those days the railway only came to Hamar, half-way up Lake Mjösen, and it was necessary to arrive at Lillehammer by steamer and drive the whole length of the dale. Now the line has been carried forward past Lillehammer, up the Logen, for seventy miles or so to Otta, and I believe it is only a matter of time before it is to run farther north. At present luckily there is a strong difference of opinion as to the best route, and the Rusten Gorge has also a word to say; so for a few years more the upper reaches of the dale may be left uninjured.

"The Pen," as some age remarked one day, "is mightier than the Sword, but not so mighty as the Pickaxe."

[1] "Tantæne animus cælestibus iræ?" = "Can the wrath of heaven possibly be so great?"

"Pickaxe indeed!" John snorted — he was trying to prise the lid off a tobacco-box with a "J" nib—"it's not half as mighty as a good tin opener."

But let that pass. The Pickaxe is indeed the power of this so-called Twentieth century.[1] Here have any number of worthy people been writing, with more or less accuracy, about Norway for scores of years without doing any harm to speak of, but one day there comes along a gang of navvies, and lo! Gudbrandsdal is desecrated by the shrieking locomotive; and by this time I doubt not the ancient "Bishop's Way" has been made almost good enough for an E. C. U. curate.

It is just conceivable that a railway line may be advantageous to a country like Norway (I suppose it is no use suggesting that it possibly is not even to a country like England), but really it is diffifult to see the slightest necessity for it, or how it benefits a people who were notoriously contented and, in their way, well off before. From the Englishman's point of view the result is horrible; it has brought no good thing, and many that are bad or contemptible. The stations are now filled with German commercial travellers and chattering people, and the tables covered with electroplate and red wine-glasses and mixed biscuits and pickles, instead of the wholesome country products. And at Otta we saw reeling about the first couple of drunken men.

By the way, not owing to, but in spite of, the railways, intemperance has very visibly decreased in Norway since I first knew it. I have never studied the question with statistics, or troubled to learn the exact working of the licensing system, but the Bishop of Chester knows all about it; and if the U. K. Alliance would only turn their energies to the diminution of drunkenness instead of the pulverization of the publican, they might possibly find a useful lesson here.

Mr. Cook is truly a wonderful man. We discovered from one of his circulars at Otta, that "that long-projected railway" men-

[1] This book is going to be up to date, even if it strains the press. —J. A. L.

tioned by Bromley Davenport, has at last been "made from Hailfax to Hell." And yet Mr. Cook makes no fuss about it; merely sets it down in the most matter-of-fact manner among other places of interest—thus: "Hell (Railway Station)," and mentions that he issues return tickets—presumably of asbestos material—at moderate rates. How pleased Ruskin will be! he must have expected it from the first.

Well, the railway may be no improvement to a Norwegian valley, but at any rate it took our baggage off our hands, and freed from anxiety, we shipped the whole crew, and put forth once more on to the river, down which, with four paddles and a galloping stream, we travelled at glorious speed.

The Otta River joins the Logen just below the railway station. It would perhaps be more correct to reverse their order, for the Otta is much the larger of the two, coming as it does from the great glaciers which lie to the west of the Otta and Vaage Lakes. It is curious to see how far the two rivers run in the same bed before they are hopelessly mixed; the limpid waters of the Logen keeping to the eastern bank, while the opaque grey-green current of the Otta swirls and eddies down the western shore.

There is something rather terrifying in the first grip with which this turbulent stream seizes on a frail canoe. In quiet water the man at the stern-paddle feels that he has the boat under control, and can put her where he chooses with a turn of the wrist, but on the broad bosom of the Otta-Logen torrent there is a perpetual working and heaving of unseen forces, with an indefinable sensation of overwhelming power about them. Sometimes the canoe obeys a touch readily enough, and the next moment she takes charge, and heads off to a part of the river where some under-current is boiling to the surface in a whirl of green and white; just like a horse with the bit between its teeth; and the steersman has to call not only for bow, but both other paddles, to work on the same side before she is in hand again.

From what I have seen of such rivers in Canada and Norway,

it appears that the biggest volume of stream runs in a heaped-up curve considerably higher than the water on either hand, Where the friction of the banks holds it back. It is in fact much as if one had to keep a boat going straight along the ridge of a roof. As long as it is exactly on the ridge things are all right, but let it bear away ever so little to either side, and it at once begins to slip downhill, and requires considerable work to bring it back again. The theory is simple enough, but the trouble is that the direction and position of this high bank of water is so constantly changing, and is so much affected by the nature of the river bottom, that it is uncommonly difficult to keep even an empty boat in the right place, and our little canoe was drawing fully seven inches.

There were two short portages when we came to impossible rapids, where the water roared furiously among jagged rocks; and soon we reached the junction with the Sjoa River, and old friend coming through Hedalen, straight from the great mountains of the Jotunheim. Here there was a longer piece of jutting fangs and surging foaming waves, and we went ashore in a corn-field, where a very English-looking Norse farmer and his men and girls made us welcome, and helped to carry the canoe the necessary two or three hundred yards.

Then down the river we flew faster than ever, and darkness began to close in upon us, and many a time my heart was in my mouth as the changing sound of the hurrying waters told of another rapid just ahead, and the pale water flashed round the black rock whose ugly peak was barely visible in the fading light. The dense grey-green of the Otta, now thoroughly combined with the transparent Logen, made it impossible to see anything below the surface; and as it grew darker, we could only guess at the probable course that the best current would take, whenever we came to wider reaches and islands thickly strewn in our course.

But we were lucky on the whole, and it was not until we were sure from the easterly course of the stream that we must be

near Storklevstad, that an error of judgment took us into a shallow rapid, and we had some trouble to get the boat to shore. There we left her, found our way to the road, and discovered from the first passer-by that the speed of the stream had made us underestimate the length of our voyage, and that we had overshot the mark by nearly a mile.

By eight o'clock, however, we were at Storklevstad, a place which in other days I had found one of the most comfortable stations on the road. But somehow it looked very much changed, and there was a heap of untidy lumber in the courtyard, and althogether I did not understand the look of things at all, until we went into the house, and were met by the dispiriting news that there were no beds, no supper—no anything. It seemed that the place had been (as so frequently happens in this land of wooden houses) completely destroyed by fire in the spring; and though part of the dwelling-house had been rebuilt, the guest rooms were not ready, and they had no appliances for feeding the hungry traveller.

The woman who owned the place (a nice Norwegian, very sad about the loss of her home) said we must go on to Vinstra, the next station, but we were too tired, an dared not run any more of the river in the dark. Fortunately I remembered well the old lady who used to keep this station, who it appeared was the mother of the present one; and a little sympathy for the misfortune of the fire, and a little talk of old times, so won her heart, that in a short time we were welcomed to a noble feast of eggs and bacon, and a variety of *delicatessen* in the dwelling-house; and afterwards a neighbour across the road gave us a bed-room and a drawing-room to sleep in. There is no doubt about the true hospitality of a country where it can survive the attack of a railroad.

And now our pleasures hurried to a close. Our Storklevstad hostess surpassed herself in providing a breakfast with delicious trout, and on a splendid morning, we found our way out of the shallows into which the night had beguiled us, and were soon

hurling down the river again at the old exhilarating speed. One portage only interrupted us, and then we landed just above Vinstra Bridge, and seeing rather a wild and wicked stretch before us, Eric and I ran it alone, John and Bobby walking on to the inn, where we meant to lunch.

Hitherto I had done the steering, but now Eric took a turn, and brought us well through a rough piece below the second span of the bridge, and we landed safely at the Vinstra Hotel.

And then, and then—it is very sad, but I suppose it had to be—we started down the rapids, just above the junction of the Vinstra River, that stream whose beautiful falls far up in the mountains had charmed the Skipper so much in bygone years, and in whose waters two of the "Three in Norway" had found so many trout.

Only the higher part of these rapids looked at all navigable, and even that was bad, so we sent our scanty baggage on by cart, and John and Bobby walked on, while (Eric again steering) we began the run, intending to twist ashore in a little bay just above the worst fury of the rushing stream. The river was very big—in high flood from a week of hot weather—it was not easy to see everything; and we overlooked a partly submerged ridge of rock, that made a dangerous back-whirl in the mouth of our little bay.

So when we came there at racing speed, it was obvious that the slightest attempt to turn meant instant swamping, and even running through the whirling back-wash was not done with a dry boat. The dip below looked bad; there was no chance, however, but to go straight at it, and we did as a matter of fact pass the worst place, where the water roared and curved over in two converging green hills, above a hidden shelf of rock. Another thirty yards and we should have been safe, when one of the big occasional waves, that rise up at odd times without warning in the swiftest rush, drove the bows to one side, and in a moment the canoe was thrown bodily over on to the top of us.

There may be deficiencies in the education that Eton provides

—I am constantly being assured that there are—but anyhow the good old school taught both Eric and me to fall out of a boat without supposing that the world was being involved in general cataclysm. So we came up from under the canoe, and told each other we were all right, a statement that I afterwards regretted; it is not good to lie like that just when you are going to be drowned. Then we started to catch the canoe, but a great wave drove her under, with a terrific bang of one end against a hidden ledge, which whirled it for a moment high above the stream. In the next instant I went down in the same eddy, and a savage rock hit one knee a numbing blow. When I came up again the poor old boat was invisible, and Eric's black head bobbing far down the rapid.

We were not more than thirty yards from shore, and had not supposed there would be much difficulty in swimming it, but never before had we felt the power of such water. It was all we could do to get a breath of air now and then, and any attempt to cross the current was of course out of the question. Now we were hurried like logs down a less dangerous place, and then I saw Eric at last edging out towards land in a friendly back-wash, and at the same moment another concealed rock hit my leg, and I caught a pinnacle under water, and hung there, just above the surface, "a demd moist unpleasant body."

Before we started on this last run I had, with great forethought, unlaced my heavy boots; but now, as a member of the Incorporated Company of Mean Men, I did not like the idea of losing them, so, with a mouthful of fresh air, let go, and followed Eric's course down stream.

That legend of remembering one's sins at these exciting moments is all nonsense. There isn't time—at least not in the Logen. I had not got beyond the first twenty million or so, when another huge wave hit me on the head, and about half the Logen ran down my throat, and I hurriedly gave up the remainder until a season of greater leisure on dry land. But the right method has since occurred to me; you should go on each time where you left

off on the last occasion when you were drowned, and in the end there is a chance that you may work through the whole account.

I used, when very young, to be afraid (founding the idea on the literature which was provided for us in those days) that I was too good to live; and the thought filled me with acute misery. Latterly a vague suspicion has begun to form itself that this early anxiety may have been superfluous, and that a more probable hypothesis is that I am too wicked to die, which belief is comforting beyond expression. But all the same, like "keen Lord Scroope" in the ballad—

> "I wadna swim that wan water" again
> "For a' the gowd in Christentie;"

and next time the boots will certainly be sacrificed.

Oh dear! how cold it was! Next day, when warmth and dryness inside and out were thoroughly re-established, some one was heard to remark: "Otta indeed! Well, if half that river's Otta, the rest must be liquefied hydrogen." But at the time we were far too shivery for conversation, and were only thankful to have come out with so little hurt.

Not a scrap of the canoe was visible, and neither boat nor paddles were ever seen again. But that afternoon a man brought us a bit of gunwale about as big as a walking-stick, which he had picked up below the Harpefoss, six miles down the river, and there next morning we saw some little scraps of basswood from our unlucky craft, little scraps of basswood from our unluckly craft, driving round and round in a whirlpool, at the foot of the narrow gorge into which the turbulent river is squeezed.

Honestly, I cannot recommend the Logen to future canoers; the fierce strength of its current, and the difficulty in seeing obstacles through the opaque water, make it a dangerous stream; and if all the bad places are portaged, the best part of the fun is lost. The very rapid that swamped us might, when there was no

flood, be run successfully, and even as it was I should generally expect to get through it all right. But once out of your boat, and obliged to swim for it, the chance of getting safe to shore out of the Logen is not very promising; and only strong swimmers, without friends and relations, ought to adventure it.

How little the Norwegian press-man knows of his business! Here is his idea of reporting our wreck, which we found in the Christiania newspaper next day; baldness and (as far at least as he knew) unvarnished truth itself. Not a word about the "devouring element" which an English paper would use indiscriminately for fire or water. No "engulphings in the raging flood," no "heart-rending shrieks" or "gallant rescues." No; he just says we rowed down the Logen and upset—and it is almost exactly what we did—but that is not the way to write newspapers:—

"THE 'AFTENPOST.'

24*th Sept.* 1898.

A CANOE VOYAGE IN GUDBRANDSDALEN

Telephone message to the 'Aftenpost.'

OTTA, *Tuesday morning.*

Yesterday there arrived from Romsdal, in a canoe, four Englishmen, who have rowed the whole way from Lesje Lake and the rapids at Rusten, where they had been obliged to portage the boat. To-day they went on again down the Logen to Sjoa, where they were again compelled to portage, on account of a short rapid. They put the boat in, and again went on down to Vinstra Railway Station, where once more they came to a short rapid. But as the rapid looked dangerous from above, two of them got out of the boat, leaving the other two in until they should get down to a flatter reach of river. Half-way down the rapids, however, the boat was sent a little sideways, and upset. The boat went down, but both the Englishmen got safe to land. All the

baggage was lost, and only a little bit of the boat was found again, down below the Harpefoss."

And here is the production to which the Poet was inspired after reading the above prose Edda:—

Adown the hurrying stream we raced,
From far-off Lesjeskogen first,
And at Holsæt with pride we placed
Our craft upon the Logen first.

That is, we *should* have acted thus
As soon as we had brought her there,
But one slight hitch prevented us—
There wasn't any water there.

We rowed, 'tis said, from Lesje Vand;
The slip is soon explained away,
Really, we did that bit by land—
The lake had all been drained away.

But when we came to Vinstra Bridge,
A fact that much upset us then,
The waters rose up in a ridge,
And overturned, and wet us then.

So when the prospects looked most black
Against our cruising more again,
We leapt upon a turnpike's back,[1]
And floated safe to shore again.

We lost our baggage, which the Romans used to call impediments:
Leastways, it *would* have gone, you know,
To join the Logen sediments.

But, as we were not quite insane,
Nor acting as a hatter acts;
We'd put that baggage in a train,
And sent it past the cataracts.

[1] I believe there are no turnpike, or any other kind of pike, in this part of the Logen. But much these poetic persons care for a little thing like that. Probably he means a turtle, or a wombat.

It was rather curious, but may serve to show what very unimportant trifles a canoe and a couple of men appear in the wild turmoil of rushing waters and half-hidden rocks, that though several people, including our companions, watched us going down the rapids, none of them knew that anything unusual had happened. John and Bobby merely thought we had rounded the corner unseen, and walked on a mile or two, expecting to find us waiting below the swiftest part of the stream.

The landlord's son, however, happened to be on the bank just opposite to the scene of the wreck, and very kindly went off at once on a bicycle to bring back the cart with our dry clothes. No doubt he also sent the message to the *Aftenpost.*

Our next proceeding to look out the story of Elijah and the Cruse of Oil in a Norse Bible, and, with the linguistic knowledge thus acquired, we purchased a bottle of Sewing Machine lubricant at the little shop, and filled our water-logged watches with it.

Then we came back to England, which, after Norway, seems a murky country, with some ill-mannered people in it. But as my family object to these subversive and unpatriotic sentiments, I cheerfully admit that, after all, there is no place *like* Home!

AFTER-THOUGHTS

The Publisher says he thinks it is a good plan to put a few lines of sensible information into a book. It seems a quaint and original idea, and I advise him to patent it before any modern writer thinks of it. It accounts for the insertion of the following pages, which it is hoped may be of some little assistance to any one who wishes to make an expedition in search of sport among the hills and dales of Norway.

It should be understood that hunting reindeer from a sæter, in the manner described in the preceding chapters, is the very easiest and most luxurious method, and in earlier years I should have looked upon it with suspicion. But John and I are growing old, and beginning to like comfort, and Eric and Bobby are young, and therefore like it still more; and for these reasons our life this summer was a great deal more Sybaritic than the reader is likely to find his first attempt in an unknown land.

The first principle that should guide him in choice of a hunting-ground is the rough rule, that the best reindeer and trout live in the most inaccessible places; birds and elk are a little different.

Remember that much of the good ground is infested with Lapps and tame deer.

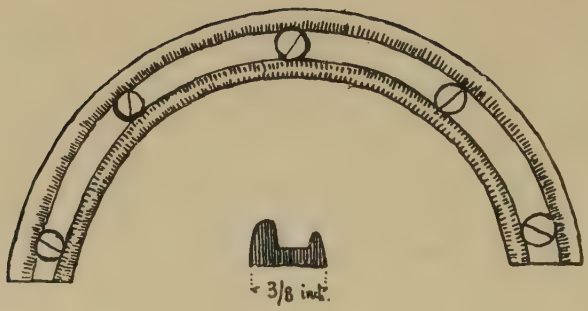
Secondly. Take the best quality of everything, unless you are a very rich man. It is only the very rich who can afford to use second-rate stuff.

Thirdly. If you are going to wander, restrict yourself to the lightest marching order and the barest necessaries. But if you know your destination, take too much of everything rather than too little. I see no sort of sense or amusement in roughing it anywhere (except of course in places like London or New York, where one cannot help it), but Norway is a country where such a very little money will buy so much assistance, that it is absurd to stick at an extra packpony or two, when it means an immense addition to your comfort during a month or two of what is intended to be pleasure.

In the name of the Prophet: Boots! The whole success of your trip depends on these, and you cannot take too much trouble about them. But I hardly know what to advise. Moccasins are the best foot-gear for hunting, yet so few white men can accustom their feet to them in the limited time before us, that I think they must be ruled out. Aim at—first, no slip; second, no noise. Waterproofness is of no importance.

The natives for the most part wear low boots, loosely laced, so giving the ankles free play; and no nails in them. This necessitates a perpetual patching with bits of leather, which are regularly pegged on every evening, and as regularly torn off or worn out during the day; and though the bare leather has a good noiseless grip on rocks, I think the trouble of the system is too great. They usually have the heels ironed.

On the whole, the most satisfactory thing that I have tried is light shooting-boots, with smooth rubber soles like tennis shoes, and soft iron tips at toe and heel (shape and section shown in drawing). Two pairs of these boots ought, bar accidents, to last through the trip, but the fjeld is terribly hard on them, and you must always have a supply of soft iron nails to take to when your rubber gives out. You *can* use nailed shooting-boots, but they are not to be compared with rubber. "Scaife's" patent soles would, I think, do fairly, if tipped at heel and toe; but I have not tried them.



Iron for boots

Two pairs of anklets, or spats.
Boot grease. Laces.
Tennis shoes.
Two caps or hats, with good overhanging peaks.
Two coats.
One waistcoat.
One Cardigan jacket.
Two pairs knickerbockers.
Three woollen shirts.
Two woollen vests.
Two woollen drawers.
Three pairs stockings. Garters.
One pair of warm mittens or gloves.
One woollen belt.
Handkerchiefs. Tie.
Towels.
Dishcloths.
One overcoat (not large).
One waterproof (my own preference is for a very small and light Gabardine cape).
Housewife. Toilet things. Mirror. Scissors.

For sleeping, a reindeer-skin bag (price at Christiania or Bergen about fifty kroner) is unquestionably the best thing. Next best come sheepskins. Take also a warmest Jæger blanket, and you can defy cold.

All the above is easily contained in a strong waterproof Holdall — size 54″ × 33″ — and the whole ought then to weigh about 65 lbs.

The colour of your outer garments, from hat to stockings, is most important. The grey of ptarmigan feathers is the exact thing. But whatever pattern is chosen, the colour must be lighter than for Scotch work. The natives wear a homespun, made of mixed dark and light grey wool, the latter predominating; and though a sprinkling of greenish yellow would do no harm (there is much lichen of this tint on the rocks), I believe their choice is the best. And what is best for reindeer is right for almost every other purpose.

As to knickerbockers, a little has been said in Chapter XI.; and the best sort is a matter of opinion. But the worst are, without question, the gorgeous advertisement-page-of-the-Field knicker-bocker-breeches. Oh, young man of the English country-house, be advised for once, and renounce those lovely garments when you make for the field. The really best things, I believe, are the shortened trousers with a split ankle, which we used to tuck into our socks for football at Eton. They are loose and comfortable; socks are less trouble than stockings; and they are proof against insect bites. But of course they are not beautiful.

SHOOTING TACKLE

Rifle and a hundred cartridges.
Gun. Cartridges.
Waterproof covers for both.
Tow. Oil and cleaning fluid (in tins). Duster. Cleaning-thong. (This is a round leather thong, just small enough to go through the rifle; length about 4½ feet. A slit about three inches long, one inch from one end of the thong, will hold tow or rag for cleaning.)
Cartridge-belt (rifle). Hunting-knife in sheath. (I prefer an ordinary butcher knife.)
Spare fittings.
Compass.
Flask.
Telescope.

A hundred rifle-cartridges is, in one sense, an absurd number

to take, when you possibly may not need half-a-dozen; but they weigh very little, and it enables you to shoot a few at a mark now and then. If you are only going to kill birds for the pot, a hundred gun cartridges will be enough; but if you pursue ryper, or go collecting, you may shoot a large number. A few 8's, a few more B.B's; the rest 5's, or thereabouts.

Rifle according to taste, but in my humble opinion any good single rifle is better for this work than the English double express, which I regard as a costly and disappointing superstition. With reindeer you may often be obliged to shoot at ranges beyond the distance to which an express bullet will travel, straight and head foremost.

But much more important than the rifle is the shooting of it; on which subject I ask pardon for venturing a few words, meant for novices only.

The art of shooting flying birds with a gun can probably only be acquired by repeatedly firing more or less in their direction. At any rate this is the popular method, and most young men get plenty of opportunities for practising it. But a rifle is quite another matter. Its use can be learnt at a target, and the number of shots that a man gets at living creatures is so small, that it is foolish to utilise them for elementary instruction. In the interests of both man and beast, any one who intends to shoot at big game ought to practise at a target until he can make a certainty of putting a bullet into, say, a nine-inch circle at any distance up to 250 yards. A few shots every day for a month should enable even a beginner to do it. If he cannot depend on this with a nice black and white target, at known distances, in fine weather, without excitement, he might as well spare the reindeer all the annoyance and himself all the trouble of toiling up Norwegian mountains, for a hardly-earned shot or two at grey moving beasts among grey stones; at a guessed range; with difficulties of rain and wind, frost and sun, and "buck-fever" to contend with; while the hunter himself is possibly panting and trembling from a half-mile run or climb over awful ground.

As to the glass, great power is not essential, but clearness and a big field are. Ease and speed of extension are also great points. I have found more reindeer with a decent little pair of opera glasses, that slip easily intoo a side-pocket, than with a good stalking-glass, simply because they were more constantly being used for casual spies.

FISHING TACKLE

Rod, according to taste. A ten-foot Farlow red-heart (Stradivarius among fishing-poles!) has for twenty-five years done all my trouting everywhere, except Canada; but my lines never happen to have fallen in those pleasant places in Norway—there are such—where the trout were likely to run above five pounds. On the whole, a rod with greater reach is decidedly preferable.

Reels and lines.

Casts and traces (of sorts).

A few English trout flies, a few salmon flies, and the bulk sea-trout and lake-trout.

Eight minnows (of sizes; Phantoms, I think, are best).

Landing net.

Silk, wax, swivels, triangles, gut, varnish, &c., and a good fishing-bag, which is very useful also as a travelling-bag.

Remember that you may possibly be unfavourably situated for fishing, and be compelled to pocket your pride, throw all you pious nurture to the winds, and peril your immortal soul with sinful nets, and otters, and other villainies. I have so far been mercifully preserved from this infamy; but one never knows what may happen, and starvation may make one acquainted with strange ways of catching fish.

TOOLS

If you can use them, all the following are desirable, and most of them essential: —

American axe (about 2½ lbs. head).
Whetstone.

Screwdriver.
Cold chisel.
Pliers, with cutting edge.
Files (Rat-tail; three-square; half round).
Small fitter's hammer (about 4 oz.).
3 lbs. wire nails
¼ lb. screws
¼ lb. copper wire
¼ lb. copper rivets and washers } of sizes.
Brace; 4 twist drills; 1 rymer.
Small saw.
Spade (if camping).

CANTEEN

Those supplied by the outfitters are mostly monuments of foolish ingenuity, and replete with unnecessaries. For our party of four we had a very practical nest of tins, constructed as shown in the sketch, which is drawn to scale.

Outside measurements in inches.

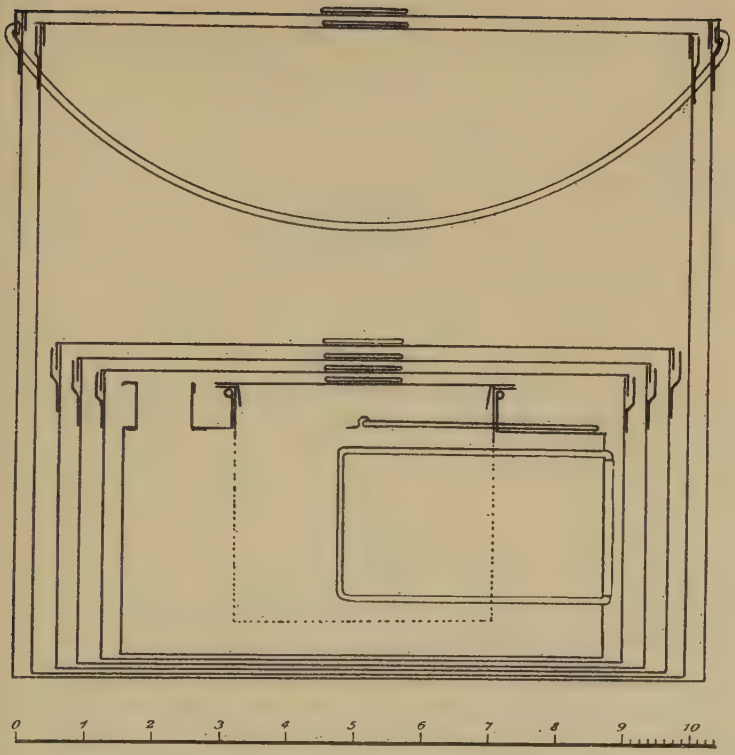
	Diameter		Height
No. 1	10⅜	×	10
No. 2	9¾	×	9¾
No. 3	9⅛	×	4⅞
No. 4	8½	×	4⅝
No. 5	7⅞	×	4⅜
Teapot	7¼	×	3⅜

Every tin has a handle attached like the one shown.

The two largest lids are made in the usual way. The three smallest spun to fit outside their tins.

All joints lapped and soldered. All attachments riveted and soldered.

The teapot has a perforated strainer, into which the wedge-shaped lid fits tightly, so that it will lift the strainer out. A pair of folding handles at back, and also a hanging handle at the top: —



Section of canteen

Strong iron frying-pan, 10½ inch.
Light aluminium frying-pan, 8 inch.
Six enamel plates, 9½ inch.
Five cups, 2¾ × 2¾ inch.
Five knives.
Five forks.
Five dessert spoons.
Two table-spoons (handles hooked, to prevent slipping into a pan).
Tin opener.
Coffee-mill, Pepper-mill } aluminium.

The whole outfit (except the large frying-pan) packed into the space above the low tins, and weighed twenty lbs.; but a great saving of weight could be made by using aluminium throughout.

The largest tin is made stronger than the rest, with good bucket handle, and iron band at bottom. A sliding hook on the handle is useful to hang a cup on, for a dipper. Some simple method of securing this outer lid while travelling must be adopted.

In some situations a milk-tin might also be necessary.

This canteen is a very luxurious one, and might be reduced in many particulars. The tins, for instance, might consist of teapot and tins No. 5 and No. 4 only, the outside one being always made strong, and 9¾ inches high. It would not be wise to reduce any of the dimensions.

SUNDRIES

TENT. — A tent is not a good habitation, however it may be made; but the Indian *tepee* is the best. If an English army-tent has the top of its cone made quite open, and protected by a movable cowl, and is pitched with three poles instead of one, you can have a fire inside it almost as comfortably as in a *tepee*. A fortyfive feet tent very comfortably holds four men; a forty feet one barely.

But such big dwellings are only fit for permanent camps. If you are frequently moving, an "emigrant's" shape is the handiest.

Ground sheets. Two at least, 6′ × 4′, with eyes along their edges.

Twenty yards light rope.
String (of sorts).
Six good straps and buckles, 18″ to 4 feet.
Eight yards unbleached calico.
Twelve yards cheapest buttercloth.

The following remedies are suggested: —

Chlorodyne; liniment for sprains; creosote; boroglyceride (2s. 6d. size). Various medicines in tabloid form; plaster; bandage; ammonia; vaseline; alum (or other preservative for skins). Bull-dog forceps. Mixture of olive oil, cedar oil, and Stockholm tar (to colour of dark sherry). Have a wee bottle of this always in your pocket; and when necessary, rub a few drops on your hands, face, and neck. It is not particularly nice, but it is very much nicer than mosquitoes or even midges.

Tobacco (to give away).

Books (including, if necessary, some sort of help to the language).

Sketching and writing materials.

Visiting cards.

Maps of your district (*Amtskarts*).

Take plenty of small notes (five and ten kroner) and coins. Change is very scarce up country.

FOOD

(*For one man one month.*)

15 lbs. Flour.
5 lbs. Hard Biscuits.
1 lb. Rice.
5 lbs. Bacon.
1 lb. Tea.
2 lbs. Coffee (unroasted).
1 lb. Chocolate.
1 tin (1s. size) Baking Powder.
½ lb. Salt.
1 oz. Pepper.
¼ oz. Nepaul.
¼ oz. Mustard.
3 small Camp Pies.
4 oz. Bovril.
Preserved Milk (if necessary).
Whisky; Brandy.
1 lb. Candles (eights).
6 lbs. Butter.
2 lbs. Apple Rings.
1 lb. Dried Apricots.
1 lb. Prunes.
1 lb. Raisins.
6 packets Lazenby's Soups.
Jam.
Marmalade.
Matches (in a waterproof tin).

The above lists contain a few things that are not necessary, and they may not contain everything that is necessary for all people in all situations, but they give as nearly an accurate idea of the most important points as I am able to suggest.

The food list is taken from our experience in this and previous years, but it has generally been supplemented by country produce in

Milk and Cream,
Eggs,
Potatoes,
Flad-brod.
Onions;

and of course if the district selected had no trouting water or ryper-ground, more provisions would be required.

The clothing mentioned is, I think, a minimum, for anything like comfort. Remember you will probably have to suffer severe cold on some occasions.

A couple of strong oiled canvas sacks are extremely useful to pack food and various other things in for travelling over the fjeld.

Never leave your abode without having in your pocket the *Amtskart*, compass, raisins, biscuits, chocolate, or some other trifle of food; a tiny spirit-flask, and matches (in a box that will keep water out even if you go overhead in a river). The best box I have found for this purpose is a .500 solid drawn brass cartridge-case, and another one cut short to fit it as a lid.

I ought to say that the fishing trip recorded in the first three chapters happened several years ago, and considerable changes may have taken place in Siredal since that time. There was talk of a Limited Company acquiring all the lakes in that district for some mysterious commercial enterprise.

THE END

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